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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the first 39 consecutive issues of the newsletter, "E.C.E. Connection," published monthly (except August) to offer information and support to early childhood practitioners. Articles from the 1994 issues include: "Some 'Affordable' Ideas To Brighten Your Classroom"; "A Notice Board: A Way To Keep in Touch with Parents and Staff"; "Learning with All Our Senses" (T. Nasus); and "Calendar Work: A Lot of Learning from a Basic Resource." Articles from the 1995 issues include: "Guiding Children"; "Planning School Outings"; "Planning a Summer Program"; "A Private Space"; "Holiday Season Crafts"; and "The Unseen Struggle: Learning Disabilities" (T. Nasus). Articles from the 1996 issues include: "Spare the Rod" (T. Nasus); "Parents as Partners"; "Workbooks and Seat Work: Appropriate Teaching Practice for the Early Years?" (T. Nasus); "How To Reinforce Maths Concepts"; "Very Different Experiences: The First Day of School"; "Fine Motor Skills"; and "Watching Television." Articles from the 1997 issues include: "What's Your Name? Teaching Children Their 'Legal' Names"; "Self Esteem"; "Graduation Ceremonies"; "The Growing Mind: Information about Brain Development"; "Nutrition and Learning"; and "The Shy and Withdrawn Child." Articles from the 1998 issues include: "Children's Misbehaviour"; "Pre-Reading: Important First Steps"; "Children's Eating Habits"; and "A Good Relationship: Developing Positive Relationships with Children." Each issue contains suggestions for classroom and learning activities and information on resources available for teachers through the ECE Connection. (KB)

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E.C. E. Connection:

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E)

1994-1998

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E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.)

Issue 1 / Sept. 1994

About This Newsletter

Working with young children is demanding. Often the task is made more difficult by a lack of resources and support. This newsletter is published to offer information and support to those who work with young children.

Readers are invited to contribute to this newsletter. Your suggestions, questions, etc. should be addressed to E.C.E. Connection, P.O. Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.

Notice Board

This section is provided to keep you up-to-date on matters related to the field of E.C.E.

Did you know that there is an **Education Resource Centre** (also the National Documentation Centre) in Grenada? It is located in St. George's, on Monckton Street, beside the museum. Materials available include: books, magazines, audio cassettes, posters. Business hours are weekdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., (hours are extended Thu.to 4:30 p.m., and Fri. to 5 p.m.). For further information call **440-5674.**

News to share? Write to us about it so we can tell others. Our address is listed above.

Some "Affordable" Ideas to Brighten Your Classroom

Those who work with young children know that a bright, cheerful room is a welcome sight to both the adults and children who use the room. Often basic repairs and a coat of paint is all that is provided. (There are some for whom even this is lacking.) The task of decorating a room is left up to the teacher and is made difficult by a lack of money and supplies. What can you do? The following suggestions may help:

- Pot some hardy (non-toxic) *plants* in a can and place them in a sunny area of the room. The children can help to tend them.
- A tree *branch* can be placed in your room and interesting objects (shells, fabric scraps, etc.) can be hung from it.

- *Magazine pictures* make interesting viewing. You (or the children) may want to cut out a selection of smaller pictures and glue them onto a large sheet of paper. This is called a *collage*.
- *Calendar*s can be obtained from local businesses.
- Discarded carnival *costumes* can be displayed.
- Tourism *posters, maps and brochures* make bright decorations.
- Using colourful paper (pages of a magazine, gift wrap, etc.) cut out the letters of the *names of your students* and decorate a wall with them.

Don't forget to use the ceiling space. Locally made *kites*, pictures, and other light-weight items can be hung from the ceiling. Ask other adults to save items to help you decorate your room, and change your displays regularly. People will notice and will start to think of you when they see interesting items that could be used to brighten your room.

Last, but by no means least, don't forget to put up the children's work. Most children like to see their work displayed. Make sure that everyone gets a turn to have his her work put up. It may not be your idea of "the best", but it's just as important to display it and find something good to say about it.

Do you have any suggestions for classroom decoration? Perhaps you would like to share them with others. We welcome your input, so drop us a line. Our address is at the top left-hand corner of this newsletter.

Quote

Patting someone on the back is the best way to get a chip off their shoulder.

Unknown

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Children Learn Through Play

Most of our growth and development is an unfolding process... like the growth of a seed. We have little control over the process, but providing the right environment allows that seed to be the best it can be. This is what childhood is all about. Children learn and grow through their experience with the world around them.

Human development can be divided into five different areas: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language.

Physical development refers to growth of the parts of our bodies.

Cognitive development has to do with development of our mental (thinking) abilities.

Social development refers to learning the skills that help us to get along with others.

Emotional development has to do with our ability to identify and control our feelings.

Language development has to do with our system of communicating with others.

Play is the way young children learn best. Unfortunately play is often thought of as "a waste of time", but children learn at play. Think about it. A group of preschoolers is playing with a tub of water and some plastic containers. There is more to this scene than meets the eye. As they bend, stretch, lift, carry and walk about, they are exercising their muscles, improving their respiratory (breathing) and cardiovascular (blood circulation) systems. Even the muscles they will use to draw and write are being tested as they grip the cups and pour the water.

Their minds are also hard at work, solving problems and developing an understanding of the world around them. "If I pour in more water it will spill... how can I lift this now that it's so full?" Real experiences in Maths and Science are being stored away for later years when we ask them about volume and mass... that's Physics!

The child's social development is being challenged. "Sherma I want to use the cup (the child grabs it, but Sherma hangs on to it). Okay, when you are finished let me use it." He or she discovers that others may have different ideas. Co-operating, sharing, taking turns, and role playing are practiced in social activities.

All play activities involve some form of communication. Both body language (facial expression, gestures, etc.) and spoken words are used. Children practice their speaking and listening skills and learn from others while they are playing. Consider this scene at the water tub: Sherma: "Give me that thing!" (The child is handed a plastic cup). No, not that, the thing with the pointy end." Troy: "That's a spout, but I'm using it." Sherma: "I want to use the thing with the spout." Sherma has just learned the correct name for a particular object. This sort of informal learning goes on all the time. So the next time someone says they're "just playing", let them know that a lot of learning is going on!

Regular Feature

Each issue will feature a song rhyme, story, craft or activity. Ideas for presentation, and a description of the how the feature can help children to practice certain skills and understand certain concepts will be included. Readers are encouraged to share their ideas.

A Rhyme

Five Fat Saussages

Five fat saussages frying in a pan
All of a sudden one went BANG!
Four fat saussages frying in a pan
All of a sudden one went BANG!
Three fat saussages frying in a pan
All of a sudden one went BANG!
Two fat saussages frying in a pan
All of a sudden one went BANG!
One fat saussage frying in a pan
All of a sudden it went BANG!
And there were NO saussages left!

Source: Round & Round The Garden

Presentation: Tell the children that they are going to cook saussages. Have each child hold out his/her hand, (palm up) to represent the pan, then place the other hand in the palm of the first hand, to represent the saussages. (As the rhyme is being said the children wriggle their fingers.) Each time the word BANG is said the children can clap loudly and fold one finger down, to represent the saussage that exploded.

Concept: The small muscles of the fingers are being exercised. Children learn to count backwards and are given a clear example of the concept of subtraction. As with any song or rhyme that is "acted out", the children also practice listening skills and learn to coordinate body movements to the words of the rhyme. Be sure to make this an enjoyable experience and don't be afraid to use your own ideas.

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E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 2 / Oct. 1994

Reading to Children

It's never too early to start reading to children. When we read to them we show them that reading is important. But what are the benefits of reading? Reading to children develops a love and respect of books. It introduces them to the rules of our written language (reading from front to back, left to right, top to bottom). It also expands vocabulary and develops the imagination.

When reading to children, try to make sure that it is a positive experience. If at all possible, pick a setting that is comfortable and quiet. Choose something you enjoy, and read with enthusiasm. Remember that the children can sense your feelings about what you read. If there is limited reading material available at your place of work, join the public library. Libraries are a great source of suitable reading material.

After reading a story, talk with the children about the story. Discuss why characters feel the way they do, explore the details in the pictures. Chat about "why" and "what if", but don't let your questions overshadow the enjoyment of the story.

What if the children aren't interested? Be flexible, perhaps they can help to choose the story? Maybe the story is too long... don't be afraid to shorten the story. Not all stories have to be finished. Try reading at times when you have a "captive audience", such as rest time. The more children are exposed to books the more they will accept them. Above all, don't give up, simply try again tomorrow. Your attitude will make all the difference.

This article was compiled from a brochure prepared by Nancy Clapple for the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario.

Bean Bags

A New Look At An Old Idea

Bean bags have been around for generations. They are easy to make, and provide hours of safe and pleasurable activity for young children. To make a bean bag all you need are:

some scraps of fabric
a needle
thread
scissors
dried beans

(Note: coarse sand, split peas, or a similar "filling" are also suitable).

1. Cut two pieces of fabric into the same simple shape. 2. With right sides together, stitch around the outer edge of the fabric, leaving an opening large enough to turn the bag right side out and get the beans inside the bag. 3. Turn the fabric "pocket" right side out. 4. Fill the pocket with beans to about three quarters full, then stitch closed. (For really quick bean bags use an old sock. Fill it with beans to the desired size, tie it off, and presto!)

Bean bags can be used in a variety of ways/settings. They encourage gross motor activity, enhance eye-hand coordination, provide an opportunity for social and language skills practice, and are safe and economical. This last point is important as each child can have his or her own, thus reducing long waiting periods and allowing "ownership" of the items. Make up games for the children to play with their bean bags. The following are a few suggestions:

. Toss and catch. Children toss the bean bags to each other or into a receptacle. You may want to make up a series of "challenges" with varying degrees of difficulty (i.e. toss into a large box, a pail, a pot...)

. Balancing. Children can walk, jump, etc. with the bean bags on their heads. They can also try to balance bean bags on other parts of their bodies while performing a task.

Bean bags can also be used to reinforce spatial relationships (above, below, inside, outside, etc.) and to assist children in following directions. Start with one step directions. As the children become competent, add another step, example: "Joan, put your bean bag in John's lap, *(first step)* then take his bag and put it under Michelle's desk *(second step)*".

Bean bags can be incorporated into other academic activities (formation of number concepts, shape or colour recognition, etc.). Create bean bags to suit your particular needs. Write and let us know some of your ideas so we can share them with others.

End

Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with criticism, s/he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, s/he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, s/he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame, s/he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, s/he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, s/he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, s/he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, s/he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, s/he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, s/he learns to like her/himself
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
s/he learns to find love in the world.

Gender vocabulary altered, author unknown.

A Notice Board: A Way To Keep In Touch With Parents And Staff

Some of you already have a notice board at work. For others, finding a space to put up information is difficult. Maybe the things your want to put up just won't stay on the notice board! Maybe there's not much to put up anyway... and it takes time to prepare anything for display. Whatever the reason, we all tend to overlook this form of communication. Who reads notice boards anyway?

Think of the last notice board you looked at. (At the grocery store, the post office...) It was probably covered with a mish-mash of curled, out-of-date advertising. Maybe you'd seen the items on the board so often that you stopped noticing them. Now think of what might catch your attention. It needs to be *attractive*. The information should be *current*, and you probably don't want to be bombarded with too much all at once. A few *key facts* are all you need. Now that you are thinking about it, can you see how presentation makes all the difference?

Notice boards are a good way to communicate with members of staff and parents/guardians. It takes a little extra time, but the rewards are informed members of your school community.

For those who don't have much space... all you need is a door, window, or wall. It needs to be located where it will be easily seen. (The area where parents, guardians, etc. wait to collect their children might be a good spot!)

Once you have a location you can define the space by putting a border around it. Use some strips of paper, or whatever else might be suitable. The idea is to make the spot stand out. Be creative!

Now think about what you might like to put on your notice board. The names of members of staff? A list of the names of the children in your program? A calendar of upcoming events? Interesting articles related to education? The information needs to be changed regularly and should help others to understand your program and keep up-to-date. The idea is to get people in the habit of looking at your board. Once this happens you have an excellent way of involving people and keeping them informed.

For those who have a problem getting things to stay attached, try the re-usable putty-like material available at office supply stores.

A few hints about notice boards:

. Try to *make the information positive*. Readers don't like to be lectured or scolded.

. When you put up information, try to *give advanced notice* if you require the involvement of others. You may need to remind your readers several times, but the chances of them being available or supplying your needs are greater if they have been given advanced notice.

. Don't overload your notice board. *A few pieces of information* are usually better than layers of material.

. Include a regular "calendar of events" and/or information about your school program. This helps others to understand and support your program.

. *Change your material regularly*. No one wants to read about your 1994 Christmas Bazaar in 1995!

. Publicly thank those who assist. A notice board is an easy way to *acknowledge any support and assistance*.

. Don't be afraid to *use humour*. A lighthearted cartoon, quote, or joke is a welcome change and can lift people's spirits.

Experiment with your own ideas and see what works for you. We'd like to hear some of your suggestions. Our address is listed to the right.

End

Notice Board

Should you have any information that you feel might be of interest to others, just drop us a line so that we can include the information in this column. We ask that you keep in mind that this is a monthly publication and give us as much notice as possible. (We recommend at least three weeks.) .

First Anniversary

Congratulations are in order for the members of the **Coalition For The Rights Of The Child.** This dedicated group of individuals, representing both government and non-governmental organizations, has been working (for the past year) to formulate strategies to better the lives of Grenada's children and youth.

We wish them every success in their endeavours.

October is Child Month

The theme this year:

"LOVE THE CHILD"

The focus of Child Month will be **effective parenting**. To increase awareness of this important subject there will be a march on Thursday, **October 27th.** The march will take place in St. George's, starting at 9:00 a.m. For further information contact Ivy Harris, E.C.E. Dept., Ministry of Health.

Editor's Note

My apologies for the obvious spelling errors in last month's issue. Due to difficulties in transmission, the unedited copy was mistakenly duplicated.

Readers are invited to contribute to this newsletter. Maybe you have something that might be of interest to others in the E.C.E. field? Your suggestions, comments, or questions are most welcome. Write to us at:

E.C.E. Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 3 / Nov. 1994

Plan Ahead for the Holiday Season

This article refers to December as the Holiday Season (instead of saying Christmas) to remind us of the fact that not all of the children in our programs necessarily celebrate Christmas. Showing sensitivity for differences makes others feel included, and models this behaviour for those around us. After all, children learn so much from our attitudes and actions.

In planning next month's activities you might want to set aside time to discuss with your class some of the different ways people celebrate during December. Pictures and illustrated books make discussions more meaningful. (Parents can be a good source of information.) You might also want to talk about the fact that there are children for whom this time of year emphasizes the differences between those who have and those who don't. Try to focus on the social rather than the material aspect.

The following are some suggestions for special activities. As you are planning ahead, there's time to ask others to collect the necessary materials.

Countdown Chain

Make and hang a fairly large paper chain with 25 links. Starting on the 1st of December, have one of the children cut tear off a link each day, to mark the passage of time. After removing each link the class can count the remaining links to show how many days until Christmas. This helps reinforce numbers and the concept of subtraction. You'll need to explain that after a weekend two links must be removed. You may want to modify this idea and only include the number of links until school closing.

See "Holiday Ideas" on next page.

Learning With All Our Senses

by T. Nasus

We gather information about the world around us through our five senses (**sight, sound, smell, touch, taste**). Under normal circumstances we are able to use all five when we learn, but it is not always appropriate to do so. For example, we are not expected to use the sense of taste to "check out" a book. Sometimes our choice is restricted because of the loss of the use of a sensory organ (i.e. being blind or deaf.), but each of us has a preferred way of learning. Do you recall the little girl who just has to see the pictures in the book that you are reading, or the little boy who touches everything he can get his hands on? Quite possibly they are showing their preference for a particular way of gathering information.

Children learn best when we allow them to utilize a variety of sensory receptors. Our teaching strategies are therefore most effective when they include several ways to learn. Where possible, educational programs for young children should allow them to see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. It is not practical (and often inappropriate) to incorporate the use of all the senses into our teaching strategies, but it is useful to keep in mind that variation helps the children to more thoroughly acquire the concepts we want them to learn.

Just for fun, let's put ourselves in the place of a young child. You are in a room with twenty other adults. Your instructor is giving you a lesson:

*"Today we are going to learn how to make **Morcak**. Pay close attention because you will have to tell me how to do it later. First, take a packet of **Morcak bunsits** and empty it into a bowl. Next, add a cup of **brin dilunter**. After stirring the **bunsit** and the **dilunter**, **nerf** it into a **vull** and **lbaken** the **nerf**."*

Did you gather what was going on? Perhaps you need to memorize the new words and the process? Maybe if you could see what was happening it would help? How about if you could feel, smell and taste (if appropriate), would that help? You would probably get a more complete picture of the process. By the way, here is the translation:

*"Today we are going to learn how to make **Jello**. Pay close attention because you will have to tell me how to do it later. First, take a packet of **Jello crystals** and empty it into a bowl. Next, add a cup of **hot water**. After stirring the **crystals** and the **hot water**, **pour** it into a **mould** and **refrigerate** the **mixture**."*

It's probably much clearer now, because you have a mental picture of what is going on, the ingredients, their properties, etc.

The point of this exercise is to suggest that a variety of teaching strategies can help you to get your point across. They need not be elaborate, just getting the children physically involved, or incorporating the concept being taught into everyday life is helpful. To give an example: if you are teaching children numbers, how about having them collect leaves, seeds, or some other readily available objects, then counting them to see how many have been collected? You could then show them what this represents in written numerals. How about counting the number of pockets, buttons, etc. on the children's clothing? Perhaps have containers with a number on the outside, and the corresponding number of objects inside? Singing songs about numbers is another idea. One teacher I spoke with had her kindergarten class play follow the leader around huge chalk numbers that were written on the playground! Your creativity will help your students to acquire a more complete understanding of the concepts that they are being taught.

End

__E.C.E. Connection__ is a monthly newsletter, available free of charge to those who work with young children. Publications are intended to offer information and support to those in the field of early childhood education. Reader's suggestions, comments, and questions are always welcome. Write to us at:

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P.O. Box 187
St. George's
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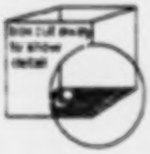
Holiday Ideas, Cont.

Use your imagination to decorate the chain. Perhaps each child can decorate one link? Maybe you want to write the corresponding day of the month on each link and/or tape a small "treat" to each link" Be creative!

Hand Print Tree

Have each child trace an outline of his/her hand on a separate piece of paper. The hand shapes can be cut out, decorated, then placed together to form a tree shape (outline shown). This idea can be used with hand prints made by dipping each child's hand in bright coloured paint.

Paint With Marbles



Cut a holiday shape (bell, star, etc.) out of sturdy paper. Using a box with newspaper placed in the bottom as a holding tray, place the cut-out shape in the bottom of the box and roll a large marble dipped in paint back-and-forth across the shape. (This activity needs close supervision.) The children enjoy watching what happens when the marble rolls around. Use different colours... the finished effect can be quite attractive.

Egg Carton Bells

Cut out individual cup portions from a cardboard egg box. Have the children paint the bell-like shapes in bright colours. Suspend the finished product with coloured yarn. Slivers of foil, coloured paper or glitter can be sprinkled in the wet paint or glued to the bells for added effect.

End

HINT - The Holiday Season is a good time to start collecting calendars from local businesses. In next month's issue we will include some calendar activities for your consideration.

You may also want to ask parents and friends to save their old Christmas cards and gift wrap. These items make very useful material for your treasured "scrap box". Watch for art and craft ideas in upcoming publications.

Classroom Display Idea

Supplies: two nails
string or fishing line

Fix the string along the wall using a nail at either end. Pull the string as tight as possible to prevent it sagging when the pictures are attached. The string should be placed at a height that allows the children to see the display easily. Paper clips, tape, staples, etc. can be used to secure the pictures to the string.

Remember to change the displays regularly to stimulate children's interest and create a bright "child centered" environment which shows that you value the children's work.

E.C.E. Connection wishes to thank Anne Watkins of Grenseve for contributing this idea.

Quote

I am not a teacher - only a fellow traveller of whom you asked the way. I pointed ahead - ahead of myself as well as of you.

George Bernard Shaw

Reader Comments

Thank you to those who have taken the time to write in. Your letters are very much appreciated. The following are comments received from readers.

Reader *- "I have passed the newsletter on to a teacher in Samaritan and tagged it on the bulletin board in Bel Air church. However, the first question asked is "Who is organizing this newsletter?..."*

Editor *- This newsletter is a joint endeavour between a small (but dedicated) group of people in Grenada, and a Grenadian living in Canada. Thanks to the wonders of modern technology we are able to liaise with each other. Offers of assistance are always appreciated. Without the support of those who give both time and money to the publication of this newsletter, there would be no newsletter!*

Reader *- "I am very interested in your newsletter. I enclose one idea and will hope to contribute more as well as encouraging the teachers I work with to contribute."*

Editor *- Many thanks for your idea for displaying children's work. (See insert above centre page.) We look forward to more of your ideas.*

Notice Board

The **Education Resource Centre** (ERC), located on Monckton Street, St. George's (opposite the public library) offers resources for teachers. Drop by and see their selection of books, tapes, and other materials. Hours of operation: Mon. - Wed. 8 - 4, Thu. 8:30 - 4:30, Fri. 8 - 5. For further information call 440-5674.

Scrap paper, suitable for use in early childhood education programs, is available to teachers. **Hi-Tech Printery** will supply end cuts, when available, to teachers who bring a sturdy labelled container to their printery on Lagoon Road. Paper will be given on a first come first serve basis. Those interested should contact Mrs. Aine Brathwaite at 440-1317/8.

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E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.)   Issue 4 / Dec. 1994

Seasons Greetings!

This space has been set aside to send a special message to those who work with Grenada's children.

So often, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, the job of caring for children is taken for granted. The routine nature of working with very young children makes it possible for us to forget the importance of this task. Children are our future, and those who show caring and concern for our future deserve support and recognition.

E.C.E. Connection wishes you and your loved ones a safe and pleasant holiday.

Quote

I touch the future:
I teach.

Crista McAuliffe

E.C.E. Connection is a monthly newsletter, available free of charge to those who work with young children. Publications are intended to offer information and support.

Do you know of any early childhood educational setting that might be interested in receiving a regular copy of this newsletter? Drop us a line and give us their address. That's all it takes to be put on our mailing list. Reader comments and suggestions are always welcome. Write to us at:

E.C.E. Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada

Calendar Work

A Lot Of Learning From A Basic Resource

Last month's newsletter mentioned that calendars could be used as an effective educational resource. Hopefully you have had some success securing at least one attractive 1995 calendar. In any event, there is still time to look around. If all else fails, a large sheet of paper, a thick marker, and an interesting picture can be made into your January page! As promised, we include some calendar related programming ideas for your consideration:

Display your calendar in a prominent location where the children can see it easily. They will probably be attracted to the pictures first. At the appropriate time (during a group activity, or individually when a child shows interest) point out details on the calendar ("I see lots of blue sky in this picture." "There are a lot of numbers written on this page." "That word begins with the letter J just like Jan's name.") This encourages the children to observe and to point out details to others. We want children to be curious and aware of their surroundings.

Calendar work is most meaningful when it is done on a daily basis. You may want to set aside a few minutes each day to update your calendar. At the beginning of each month you can point out the change in the name of the month. Point out that each day of January has its own number. The children can help you to keep track of which day it is. You may want to allow each child to have a turn to cross off the "old day". Now you can count from January 1, (pointing as you go) to January 2, and so on. By the time you get to the end of the month you will be counting up to 31! You may want to shade in the weekends and other days you aren't in school and indicate special occasions (birthdays, etc.). This helps to make the passage of time more meaningful.

Age appropriate calendar activities:

Toddlers - look at pictures, point out interesting details, (develops vocabulary)

Preschoolers - indicate daily changes on calendar. (i.e. "We cross off this day... today is day number two.") Play games, let the children see how many of the same numerals they can find.

Kindergarten - indicate important dates (birthdays, holidays, trips, etc.) Discuss why people use calendars and investigate the various parts of a calendar. Use discarded pages for games that enhance listening skills ("Using your red crayon colour all the number sevens you can find.")

Remember that each child progresses at her/his own rate. Calendar experiences should be meaningful to the children. Their enjoyment of the activity allows for maximum learning. Don't be preoccupied with having children learn details by heart. It's more important that they begin to understand general concepts (i.e. We use a calendar to mark the passage of time.)

Note: Old calendars come in handy for art and craft activities. The blank backs of calendar pages make good quality paper that stands up to paint. They can even be taped together for murals, etc.

End

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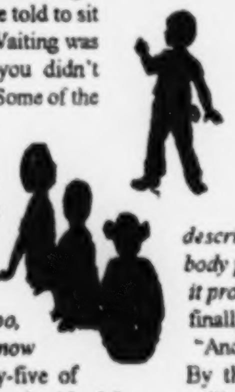
Show and Tell

A Short Story for Young Children by T. Nasus

Every once in a while Mrs. Tamboulay let the children in her class bring something special from home. She called it "Show and Tell". Some children enjoyed it, some children didn't. It always took a long time for the children to tell about what they'd brought, and waiting your turn was hard. Some children got the wiggles and had to be told to sit up and pay attention. Waiting was especially difficult if you didn't have anything to show. Some of the children never did.



On this particular Show and Tell day Mrs. Tamboulay called the children to sit on the floor in a circle. *(Clap hands and call: "Yoooooo hooooooo, come and sit for circle now children.")* All twenty-five of them squeezed together beside Mrs. Tamboulay. She sat on a chair. *(Make exaggerated actions of squeezing into place.)* One after another the children who had things to show stood up and told the others about their items. One girl had a carnival costume that she'd worn at Kiddies Carnival. *(Pretend to be showing an elaborate costume.)* Another had a game that her aunt had sent her in a barrel from New York. *(Pretend to be showing a game in a box.)* One boy had a toy car. He didn't want anyone to touch it because he said they would break it. *(Pretend to reluctantly show a toy car, but pull it away as if you don't want it to be touched.)* Another boy brought in a photograph of his big brother winning a prize at Sports Day. *(Pretend to proudly show a photo.)* He said it was from the newspaper. And then it was Edouard's turn.

Edouard had a hard time sitting and listening to his friends talk. He had been scolded several times for disrupting the class, and he just couldn't wait another minute. He had forgotten to bring something to show, but he wanted to get up and stretch his legs, so he stood up and said,

"I'm going to show you me!" *(Point to yourself in an exaggerated manner.)*

The class laughed and Mrs. Tamboulay raised her eyebrows, like this *(show action)*, but Edouard continued.

"My name is Edouard. I'm tired of sitting down, and I want to show you ME." His teacher, didn't have a happy face, but she didn't look angry either, so Edouard continued.

"This is my head. This is my neck. These are my shoulders. This is my chest. This is my back. This is my..." *(Point in an exaggerated manner to the body parts that you wish to name. You may want to describe the function of the various body parts, example: "This is my hair, it protects my head.")* When Edouard finally got to his toes he said,

"And that's all of me."

By this time Edouard's teacher was smiling. She stood up, took his hand and said,

"And what a fine boy you are. I asked people to bring in things that were special and forgot just how special each one of you is. Thank you for reminding me Edouard."

Edouard beamed *(Wide grin.)* and sat back down. He didn't have the wiggles any more, and he felt good. He sat and listened while the rest of the class showed the things they had brought in, but nothing was quite as unique as Edouard.

The End.

Show & Tell has no pictures to hold a child's interest so you might want to use the italicized information included in the story to make your words "come to life." Your facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, will make the story more meaningful. Add props (as indicated in the story) if you can locate suitable items. Don't be afraid to alter the story to suit your needs.

Begin by reading the story to yourself once or twice. Next, add some "action" where appropriate. Children like exaggeration, so don't be shy, your enthusiasm will help them to enjoy the experience.

Show & Tell is a good way to reinforce the correct name and function of body parts. It can also be used as an introduction to a discussion about feelings. (More about children's feeling in upcoming issues.)

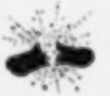
Notice Board

Coming Soon...

Curriculum Kits

These self contained educational resource kits are designed to enhance your academic program. Each kit is based on a topic or theme. Starting in 1995, "THE ALPHABET" and "NUMBERS" will be on loan to teachers working with nursery and preschool children. Look for details in our January issue.

Save empty plastic soft drink bottles. In our next issue we will offer some ideas of how to use these items to make resources for your educational program.



New Year's Ideas

New Year's is generally an adult celebration. For very young children the concept of a new year is beyond their level of understanding. To help older children to attach meaning to this celebration you might want to discuss with them some of the things that mark the New Year (new month called January, number 1994 changed to 1995, New Year celebrations, etc.) The more visual props you have (i.e. a calendar for 1994 and 1995) the better. Let the children give you their ideas. Talk to them about the concept of New Year Resolutions (a resolution means something you intend/would like to do) Ask them to help you make a list of classroom resolutions. (If they can't come up with any start by giving one that you have decided for yourself, for example, "We will have a story time every day.") In the coming days and weeks point out the resolutions that have been or are being addressed. This will help to reinforce the meaning of making a resolution.

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education
Issue 5 / Jan. 1995

Guiding Children

The first of three articles on behaviour management.

About thirty-five years ago a young Irish anesthetist, working at the Colony Hospital in St. George's, came across a toddler lying in a crib. The child was listless and unaware of its surroundings. The doctor's physical examination showed no sign of any obvious impairment, so he made some inquiries and was told that the child was retarded. According to hospital staff, the mother had abandoned the baby at birth. Employees at the hospital had been left to feed and clothe the child, but had little time for much else. This bothered the young doctor and the next day when he was making his rounds he collected the baby and carried it with him. This scene continued on a daily basis and within weeks the child had begun to respond. It was not long before the child was behaving in much the same manner as other toddlers.

Similar cases can be found in countries all over the world. Studies of children reared under conditions of extreme neglect indicate that even the most basic physical abilities (reaction to temperature, sight, speech) are affected by this form of abuse. In order to develop into functioning members of society, children need more than food and shelter. To learn the ways of the society in which they live, children need to interact with others. It is through observation and practice that children learn how to behave in an appropriate manner.

Controlling children's behaviour is the subject of most conversations dealing with classroom management. Call it discipline, consequences, punishment... those who work with children (be they parents, teachers, or other significant adults) have the job of teaching children how to "fit in." Opinions on how to do this range from the "very strict" to the "permissive" (very few controls). We could debate the merits of the different methods of controlling children's behaviour for hours. The fact of the matter is that, even though we may not realize it, we each have our own personal philosophy of behaviour management. To get in touch with our feelings about this issue it might be helpful to reflect on the following questions:

1. What children's behaviours do you consider most distressing? (i.e. untidy appearance, wasting food, toileting accidents, lying, disobedience...)
2. What do you think prompts children to behave in a way that displeases you?
3. How do you let children know when their behaviour ***is*** appropriate?
4. How do you let children know when their behaviour ***is not*** appropriate?
5. How does your method of controlling behaviour assist the child in learning the "correct" way to behave?

These are pretty tough questions. One of the most difficult things for us to do is to reflect on our own feelings, but as teachers we are always learning. The purpose of this exercise is to help us serve the varied needs of our students.

Both children and adults benefit from encouragement. Praise and recognition go a long way in cultivating appropriate behaviours. Just think of it... another adult walks into your class and begins to criticize the way you are teaching. Not only is it humiliating, but if it is done several times, with no recognition of the things that you are doing

See "Guiding Children," Page 2

CURRICULUM KITS

What is a curriculum kit?
A curriculum kit is a collection of educational resources put together to offer ideas and re-usable materials to support an early childhood education program. Each kit is based on a particular theme or subject area and comes in a self contained *plastic carry box*. Included is a *list of contents* and *activity cards* (to offer programming ideas). Materials available can include: *posters, story books, games, puzzles, table toys and/or manipulative materials.*

Why provide these kits?
E.C.E. Connection is published to offer support and information to its readers. Curriculum Kits are an extension of this service.

See "Curriculum Kits," page 2

We've Added A Page!

Starting with this edition, **E.C.E. Connection** will have a "page three." This gives us more room, and allows us to use the back of our extra page for mailing information.

As always this newsletter is available free of charge to those who work with young children. Publications are intended to offer information and support. Reader comments and suggestions are always welcome. Write:

E.C.E. Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada.

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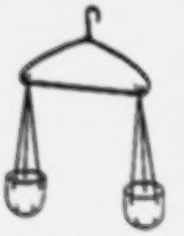
Classroom Resources From Soft Drink Bottles

Last month's issue mentioned that we would include some ideas for making classroom resources out of plastic soft drink bottles. The following are just a few suggestions. (We encourage readers to contribute additional ideas, this way we can share your ideas with others)

A set of **balance scales** can help children to experience the relationship between shape, size, and mass. To make a set of scales you will need: *a sturdy coat hanger, twine, two large (2 litre) plastic soft drink bottles - two identical plastic margarine containers will do just as well, a hole punch (or item suitable for making holes in the plastic), scissors.*



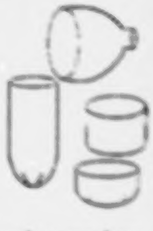
First, cut the plastic containers to a manageable size. These "bowls" need to be suitable for holding the items that the children might want to weigh. They will hang on either side of the balance scale as shown. Make sure that all cut edges are smooth, raw plastic edges can be sharp!

Second, make three holes in the rim of the containers. These will allow you to suspend the bowls from the coat hanger. The holes need to be positioned so that the container hangs level.

Third, tie a length of twine to each hole. Gather the free ends together and knot.

Last of all, secure one bowl to each end of the hanger (as shown above). Make sure that the twine securing the bowls to the hanger is the same length so that the bowls hang level. You will have to play around with the twine to get it just right, so don't knot it off too tightly right away. Now that's done your scales are ready.

You may wish to introduce them to the children (show them how to use them), or just let them find them in the appropriate section of your classroom. It might be a good idea to make more than one set of scales to avoid long waits for turns. Scales can be used to compare the weight of anything that fits into the bowls. Ask the children to guess which item is heavier before they weigh it. This stimulates estimation skills, a vital part of mathematics.



Plastic soft drink bottles can also be used to make **toys for your sand or water play area**. Cut the bottle as shown (right) and you have a funnel, receptacles and/or sand moulds.

A collection of bottles can be used as **bowling pins**. This is a "fun" way to improve eye hand coordination as the children roll a ball or similar object to knock down the bottles.

Number recognition and enumeration skills can be enhanced by clearly marking each of ten bottles with its own number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 ,6, 7, 8, 9, 10). Use a permanent felt tipped marker. To make the bottles more stable and give them some weight fill them with water. Screw the tops on very tightly then let the children use the bottles to practice putting the numbers in order. Don't pressure the children into using them in this way. Make markings on the floor to indicate how they can be placed in sequence. Some children will only want to move the bottles around... they are using their muscles to grip and move the bottles and experiencing mathematical concepts (weight, volume..) they will use later on. Others will try to replicate the number sequence. You can comment on what they are doing and repeat the numbers and/or draw attention to the pattern. Later when they are familiar with the pattern they may want to play games with the bottles. Examples of games are: switch some of the bottles and let them return them to their correct position. Place the bottles at different locations around the room or on the playground and have the children congregate at the bottle whose number has been called. Be sure to make these activities enjoyable and age appropriate. Children learn best when they are interested in the activity and it is suited to their level of understanding.

End

Guiding Children

(Continued from Page 1)

well, you begin to look for reasons to justify what you are doing, stop listening, or lose interest all together. Now, if that person had come into your class and pointed out what you were doing well, how would you feel? Chances are you would be much more responsive and might even look for ways to earn added recognition.

We need to let children know that we notice when they behave in an appropriate manner. Words like "good" or "nice" are helpful but can become overused and lack the details that tell children exactly what it is we want them to do/continue doing. Try to make up a list of words that can be used instead. How about "splendid," "terrific"? A short sentence can also be helpful: "I like the way you.........", "Thank you for.........", or "You worked for a long time at.........." This serves to highlight what it is we want. You might be surprised by just how encouraging the simple phrase "I noticed that you........." can be. Sometimes just a hand on a head or shoulder is enough to tell a child they are on the right track or that you are there for them. Recognition goes a long way in helping children to be successful, and that is the object of our efforts. It sure makes our jobs easier!

End

Curriculum Kits

(Continued from page 1)

Who can use these kits?

Kits will be on loan to teachers working with young children. There is no charge for the use of the kits, but those borrowing the kits are responsible for them and must return them in good condition.

Where can I borrow a kit?

At present **E.C.E. Connection** is making arrangements for a suitable dissemination point. Once this location has been established kits will be available. Initially THE ALPHABET and NUMBERS will be on loan. Once the effectiveness of these kits has been assessed we hope to add other subject areas to our "library." Look for further details in the next issue of **E.C.E. Connection**.

Notice Board

Have something coming up? Over 150 copies of **E.C.E. Connection** are distributed every month. Readers are invited to use this section for sharing relevant information. Drop us a line and we'll do the rest! (Please give us at least four week's notice.)

Simple Puzzles From Old Greeting Cards

Old greeting cards make quick and easy puzzles. All you need are a few attractive cards and a pair of scissors. First trim the card to suit your needs then cut it into interesting pieces. (You may wish to reinforce the puzzle by gluing the card to a piece of cardboard before you cut the pieces.) You will need to make sure that your puzzles are age appropriate. They should offer a challenge but should not be so difficult to assemble that they frustrate the child. (It might be necessary to assemble the puzzle first then, once the children have seen the complete picture, have them assemble it.) Puzzles help children to see relationships between objects exercises for the mind!

A Child Speaks

Give me food to nourish me. Give me warmth and comforting security in your love. Things change so quickly and appear so strange.

Let me enjoy my five senses. Give me plenty of things to handle, to feel, to smell, to touch, to hear, and some that I may break.

Let me try out my new powers as my body develops, to sit, creep, stand, walk, climb, and jump when I'm ready. Don't mix up the natural needs of my body with your own emotions or mind. Don't refer to my experiences as "too much, too many, too long."

Don't punish me for being angry when I've been disappointed or deprived. It's bad enough as it is. Speak to me with your heart. I don't always understand your words.

Surround me with kindly people. Give me peace in which to grow. Give me a corner ... all my own. Give me my share of attention and consideration. Let me question and give me as honest an answer as you know.

Let me experiment and find out things for myself. Let me stay sensitive to beauty. Let me have my fun out of little things, no matter how foolish they may seem to you. Encourage my efforts to do things, even when I don't do them very well. Be patient with my little messes. I'm learning.

Let me have responsibilities. Measure them out to me according to my size. Let me learn to take my turn in a task, a game or a reward. Watch me play and in this way let me tell you how I'm trying to work out the problems I'm up against.

When you tell me to do this and that, tell me why. Let me feel that I'm wanted, that I'm important to you. Include me in (your) plans when you can. Be friendly and loyal to me, so that I can learn to be the same to others. Prove to me that a promise is a promise.

Please don't keep me (a) baby when I want to grow up. Don't make me afraid of loosing your love. Don't implant your fears in me. My own are hard enough to handle.

Help me to feel the difference between make-believe and reality. Don't call make-believe lying.

Help me not to act when I'm angry. But don't make me so afraid of being angry that I lose my capacity to feel strongly.

Let me learn, bit by bit, to want and to postpone, and to bear pain.

Let me look forward to pleasures that are coming.

From the "Parent Educator"
article by Lloyd Scott, Family Counsellor

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E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 6 / Feb. 1995

Guiding Children

The second of three articles on behaviour management.

Learning is a lifelong process. Each stage of our development prepares us for the next. If our experiences are generally positive we feel good about ourselves and proceed with confidence.

As teachers we concern ourselves with encouraging children's independence and self control. We do so by providing safe and appropriate experiences.

In last month's issue we discussed using positive reinforcement and recognition as a means of encouraging appropriate behaviour. This month we will focus on LIMITS.

Limits are a necessary part of any behaviour management program. Clear, reasonable and consistent guidelines set the stage for appropriate behaviour. But what is a "good" limit? According to Marian Marion (*Guidance of Young Children*, 1987) there are five criteria for good limits.

First, **a good limit helps a child achieve self control and learn how to work with others**. Example: The children are painting. They are told that they can paint if they do so on their own paper. Agnes insists on painting on Marita's work. She is told that she cannot be permitted to use the paints for the rest of the day. This rule gave Agnes a chance to choose and provided a consequence that focused on her behaviour. She may be thinking, "If I want to paint I have to do it on my paper."

A good limit protects children's health and safety. Example: Children must stay within the fenced playground area when they are outdoors. There is a road nearby... this is a safety rule.

A good limit never degrades a child. Example: Ms. Ava publicly scolds the children in her class if they have toileting accidents. They are made to rinse their soiled clothing and sit away from the other children until it dries. Ms. Bone quietly assists any child who has a toileting accident and asks that all parents send a change of clothing with the child "just in case."

A good limit has real meaning. Rules that have a clear purpose are more likely to be understood and followed. Example: Before they are allowed to go outdoors Ms. Colin has her class stand in a straight line with their hands on their heads. No moving or talking is allowed. Ms. Davis has her children gather, but they can sit and talk quietly. Once everyone has gathered she accompanies them outdoors.

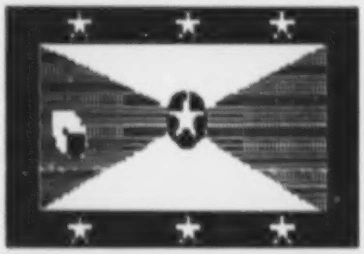
A good limit is developmentally valid. Children go through remarkable changes in the first several years of life. Physical, social, emotional, linguistic (language) and cognitive (thinking) development means

See "Guiding Children," pg. 2

February 7th: Independence Day

Although the significance of Grenada's Independence is generally above the comprehension of very young children, you may wish to use this occasion to call attention to Grenada's flag. Discuss the flag's colours (red, yellow, green) shapes (rectangles, triangles, stars, circles) and their spatial arrangement (middle/centre, left, right, etc.). Ask the children to look out for the flag. *Where did they see it? How many flags did they manage to find? Large? Small? How big were the flags they saw?*

Numbers, colours, shapes, comparative sizes, and a lot of language development all from Grenada's flag!



***E.C.E. Connection** is a monthly newsletter available free of charge to those who work with young children. Publications are intended to offer information and support to those in the field of early childhood education. Reader's suggestions, comments, and/or questions are always welcome. Write to us at:*

E.C.E. Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada

It has become traditional to hold school sports at this time of year. Playing fields everywhere attest to the efforts of teachers and students. Generally these events do not involve preschoolers, but four and five year olds participate in a number of the more "generic" activities.

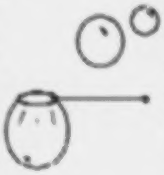
Most young children enjoy being part of some form of sporting event. The excitement of a sports day can add a new dimension to their school experience. But there are times when the pressure of having to perform proves too much. For children who are not ready for the more competitive aspects, a more cooperative approach may be helpful.

The following are a few non-competitive gross motor activities for your consideration. Adding these to the more traditional activities (i.e. running races) helps to encourage participation from all the members of your school program.

An **obstacle course** can be a lot of fun and allows each child to participateat her/his own level. Example:crawl under the table, jump over the rope, wriggle through the box on your tummy, step through the line of car tires.

A few containers of various sizes and some bean bags can be used as a **bean bags toss**. (For information on making bean bags see the Oct. '94 issue of E.C.E. Connection.)

A few **old car tires** offer a challenge as groups of two or three children roll them along a prearranged course.



Blowing bubbles is a lot of fun. (A mixture of liquid soap and glycerine works well and wire clothes hangers can be made into bubble "wands." The children get lots of exercise as they try to catch the bubbles!

Regardless of what is planned, your understanding and support of children who are stressed by competitive activities makes them more comfortable and respects their feelings. Often, time and understanding are the greatest gifts we can give children who are not ready for a particular experience.

End

Guiding Children *(continued from pg. 1)*

increasing capabilities. Adults should be prepared to consider Example: John at 2 1/2 years finds it difficult to sit still for any length of time and interrupts constantly at story time. The program he is in has story time during snack time. The story is short and the book full of illustrations. As the children become better able to listen to stories he will be expected to sit for longer periods and story time will be separated from snack time. Louisa at 4 years can sit still and listen for longer. The children gather around the teacher and listen quietly while the story is being read.

Setting practical and reasonable limits is important for both the children and the adults involved. Unnecessary or inappropriate limits are difficult to enforce and make our jobs much more stressful. At times the setting of rules is beyond our control and we may not agree with rules already in place. It is important for adults to come to an understanding about guidelines and for each person to feel comfortable with the limits that are set. Consistency avoids confusion. Be kind to yourself and to the children your work with. There is no harm in making a review of your expectations and, if necessary, altering them. It may make your job a little easier.

End

Reader Comments

Thank you to those who took the time to write in. Your comments are very much appreciated... they help us to be more useful to you. Reader suggestions:

Include information on -
 playdough recipes
 children's cooking recipes
 songs, poems, rhymes
 ideas for school outings

A recipe for playdough is included below. Look out for more of the above suggestions in future publications.

PLAYDOUGH

Playdough is an enjoyable way for children to learn a variety of concepts. Working the dough provides the opportunity to improve control of the small muscles of the hand... muscles used for later writing activities. Playdough also provides a safe way for children to express their feelings and relax.

Equipment:	**Material:**
bowls (2)	flour (3 cups)
measuring cup	salt (1 cup)
tablespoon	vegetable oil (1 Tblsp)
mixing spoon	water (1 cup)
	food colouring (optional)

Process:

Combine liquid ingredients in one bowl. Mix dry ingredients in the second bowl. Gradually stir liquid ingredients into dry ingredients. (If the mixture is too dry, add a little more water. If it is too sticky, add a little more flour.) Knead dough until pliable. Store in an airtight container.

Notice Board

Let Others Know!

E.C.E. Connection now distributes over 200 newsletters to locations in Grenada and Carriacou every month. What a good way to let others, interested in E.C.E., know of related activities! This section has been provided so that you can share your news with others. Just drop us a line and we'll do the rest. (Please give us at least four weeks' notice to include your information in the next publication.)

Just a thought...

One hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of clothes I wore. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

Quote adapted
Author unknown

Back Issues Available

E.C.E. Connection is six months old! If you would like copies of previous issues just send a stamped, addressed envelope to:

E.C.E. Connection
P. O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada

Please specify which issue(s) you would like to receive.

Salutations!

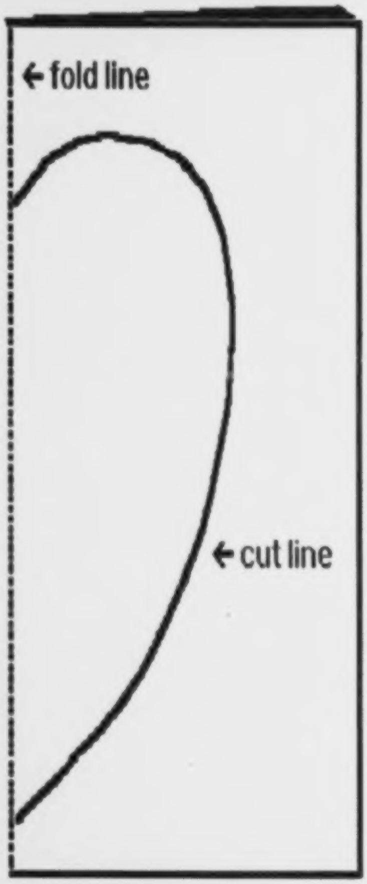
This section has been set aside to send a special greeting to the staff of *Harvey Vale Pre-school in Carriacou.* **E.C.E. Connection** is waiting to hear from you. Should a staff member write us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (the letter must be postmarked before the end of February '95) a set of classroom incentive stickers will be sent to you at your school.

Salutations will be a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected at random from a computer generated list. If you are on our mailing list you are eligible. Look for next month's newsletter to see if your name appears. Good luck!

February 14th is Valentine's Day.

If this is an occasion that your class recognizes/celebrates you may want to use this time to discuss *heart shapes.* A story about heart shapes can be incorporated into a demonstration of how to cut out a heart shape. Using a square sheet of (red) paper, fold it in half (as shown to the right) and cut along a line (as shown) which will produce a heart shape. Your story could go like this:

"Oh my! Valentine's is coming up and all I have is this SQUARE sheet of paper *(show square)*. We will have to have Valentine SQUARES this year! What a shame! But wait! If I fold it like this *(fold square in half to make rectangle)* it changes the shape. Now we have Valentine RECTANGLES! How does that sound? *(children will probably say noooooooo!)* Maybe if I used these scissors to cut here *(cut along cut line, but don't unfold the heart yet)*... no that doesn't help. Wait! What's this? *(unfold heart)* Oh look, here is a Valentine HEART!"



E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 7 / March 1995

Guiding Children

The third of three articles on behaviour management.

Dealing with a room full of young children can be quite a challenge. We all know that there are good days and "not-so-good" days. To create and maintain an environment that meets the needs of all participants is an ongoing process.

Part one and two of this series focussed on *positive reinforcement* and *setting appropriate limits*. In this final article we look at THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT.

No two children are the same, each is a unique combination of physical and mental characteristics. It would be unrealistic to expect that all children would respond to the school experience in the same manner. Yet, more often than not, tight budgets and large class sizes compel us to restrict our classrooms to the bare minimum and treat children as if they were all alike. But overcrowding and a lack of equipment cause behaviour problems. The question is, "How can we modify the environment when resources are generally non-existent?"

This is where ingenuity comes in. Those who work with young children become very inventive. Just let your creative juices flow!

The first thing you need to do is spend some time observing your classroom. Try do this when your room is being used by the children and also when it is empty. If at all possible, ask someone to supervise in your place while you observe what is going on. Sit quietly in one location and make notes about what you see. Look for the things that work and the things that don't. (I remember being surprised to find that one area of my room was the source of frequent disruptions. I changed the layout and things improved.)

Once you have had a chance to view the "goings on" when the room is full of children, do the same thing when the room is empty. Give some thought to the way your room is set up. Are there items of furniture that could be placed more effectively? Perhaps there is not enough space devoted to a particular activity. Don't be afraid to experiment. Moving furniture closer together or further apart may give your room a different feel. Remember that open spaces encourage running and more vigorous activity. Use shelves or other items of furniture to "break-up" the space. (Don't forget that you'll need to be able to see what is going on in the room. Try to position your furniture to afford adults a clear view of all areas of the room.)

The following is a list of things to watch for. Although it is not always possible to fulfill all of these criteria, it is useful to keep in mind that they have an effect on behaviour.

1. **Minimize waiting.** Young children are more likely to engage in unacceptable behaviour if they are

See "Guiding Children," page 2

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Readers are invited to contribute to this newsletter. Please address your comments, suggestions and/or questions to:

ECE Connection
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St. George's
Grenada

Taking Time To Talk

It is thought that we learn language through interaction with others and an inborn ability to master the complexities of the spoken word. Each of us has a built-in desire to communicate and we learn language to help us do so more effectively. This learning is not done through formal teaching, but rather from our exposure to language.

Children need first hand experience to give meaning to language. For example, if a child is to learn what the word banana means, s/he needs to see, smell, touch and taste a banana at the same time as s/he hears the word banana. Children need to experience the meaning of words to make those words useful.

What we say to children, how we say it, and how we respond to their efforts to communicate is important. How can we help children to learn language and use it effectively? The following are some suggestions of things that adults can do to encourage language development:

See "Talking" page 3

PS 026905

Open, Shut Them

The following rhyme can be used to help children develop body awareness, to help them focus their attention (particularly after vigorous activity), to help settle children who are being rambunctious, or just for fun. The rhyme can be performed slowly, quickly, quietly, and loudly. Use actions and facial expression to make the rhyme more interesting.

Chorus:
Open, shut them *(use hands)*
Open, shut them
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them
Open, shut them
Put them in your lap.

Creep them, creep them very slowly *("walk" fingers)*
Right up to your chin.
Open up your little mouth
But do not put them in.
(shake head)

Chorus

Creep them, creep them very slowly
Right up to your cheeks.
Cover up your little eyes
Give a little "peep" *(as in peek-a-boo)*

Chorus

Creep them, creep them very slowly
Right up to your nose
Creep them, creep them very quickly
Right down to your toes!

Author unknown

Guiding Children (Continued from page 1.)

bored or "at loose ends." Keep them involved!

2. Where possible and appropriate, **offer a choice of several activities**. This avoids long waiting periods and is more likely to keep everyone occupied. (Example, you can listen to the story, do a puzzle, or use the crayons.)

3. **Make it clear where things belong**. Use pictures or silhouettes to indicate where each piece of equipment "lives." When furnishings allow the children to be independent, staff spend less time on housekeeping activities and can spend more time interacting positively with the children.

4. **Alternate active and passive activities**. After periods of sitting and attending children need to "let off steam." An active song or rhyme or some outdoor activity can help those with "the wiggles" to get back on track.

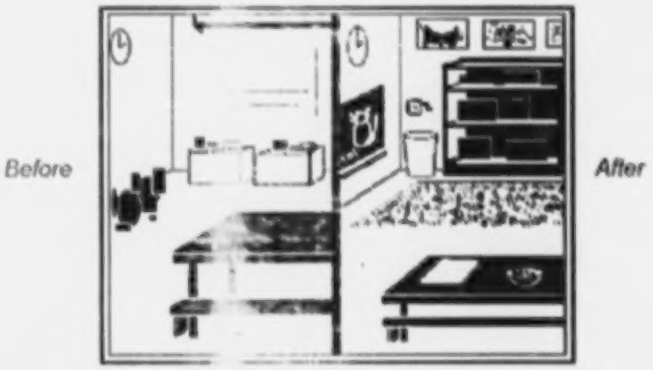
5. It goes without saying that overcrowding is a major cause of behaviour problems. As space is always an issue, you may want to break your room(s) into smaller **interest areas**. These areas focus on a particular activity and allow small groups of children to work together. As these areas allow children to be actively involved they require less adult supervision. Marks on the floor and careful placement of furniture can create these special areas. (More on interest areas and furnishings in the April issue.)

6. **Decorate your room to make it bright and interesting**. This need not be costly. Displaying the children's work makes the room attractive and has the added bonus of showing the children that you value their efforts. Be sure to say something positive about each child's work and give every child a chance to have their work displayed.

7. **Make sure that the lighting is adequate**. A room that is too bright or too dark can affect the mood of the class.

We've touched on some elements of the classroom environment that affect behaviour. For children to learn to control their own behaviour we need to provide a supportive environment in which they can safely practice the skills they need to learn to be responsible members of the school community. No two classrooms are the same, just as children differ in their needs and wants. As educators we need to "play detective" to look for the reasons behind disruptive and unacceptable behaviour. Treat each child as an individual. Don't be afraid to experiment. Some things work, others aren't quite as successful. We are all learners and work best when we are treated with love and respect.

End



Note: Next month's issue will feature more about INTEREST CENTRES.

The articles appearing under the heading "*Guiding Children*" were written by T. Nasus.

Reference: Marion, Marian. Guidance of Young Children, Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1987.

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Salutations!

This sections has been set aside to send a special greeting to the staff of ***Coast Guard Pre-school in St. Mark's.*** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Should a member of your staff write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (your letter must postmarked before the end of March '95) a set of incentive stickers will be mailed to your school.

Note: Names are selected from a computer generated list. If you are on our mailing list you are eligible. Look for next month's issue to see if your name appears!

Talking (Continued from page 1.)

1. **Show interest** in what is being said. Stoop down to the child's level, maintain eye contact, and **listen** without interrupting. Your facial expressions will send a message to the child.
2. **Make your questions open ended.** This way the child's response need not be "right" or "wrong," or be limited to one word. (For example, instead of "You like that picture?" try "What can you tell me about the picture?") Give time for a responce.
3. If a child seems reluctant to talk, use **information talk.** This is like a running commentary of what the child is doing. (Example, if the child is colouring a picture you could say "You are using a blue crayon to make lines on you paper... now you have chosen a red crayon.")
4. If we continually correct what a child is saying, the child stops participating in the conversation. **Use indirect correction** instead. To use this method repeat what the child has said, using the correct words. (Example, Beatrice has just told you "I goed to the beach." You can say "You WENT to the beach!")
5. **Expand on what the child is saying.** For example, three year old Ann says "I got new shoes!" You could add "You have a new pair of shoes! I like the shiny black colour and the gold buckles!"

You are an important role model for language. Your enthusiasm and patience go a long way in helping children to become effective communicators. End

Reference: Jeanne Machado, Early Childhood Experiences in Language Arts, Delmar Publishers, New York, 1995.

Editor's Note

It appears that a portion of last month's article on behaviour management was inadvertently deleted. For your information the deletion can be found on page two under the heading - **Guiding Children** (continued from Pg 1). The line should read as follows: "increasing capabilities. Adults should be prepared to consider these changes."

ECE Connection is pleased to announce that membership cards are available (free of charge) to anyone working in the field of early childhood education. These cards allow members to borrow ECE Connection's curriculum kits and related educational material. Although three kits are available, we are still in the process of establishing a distribution point. Those wishing early access to the kits are asked to write to ECE Connection. Our address is listed on page one.

Notice Board

Look out for

Grensave's week of activities

Mar. 26 - Apr. 1

Quote

The world seldom notices who the teachers are, but civilization depends on what they do and what they say.

Author unknown

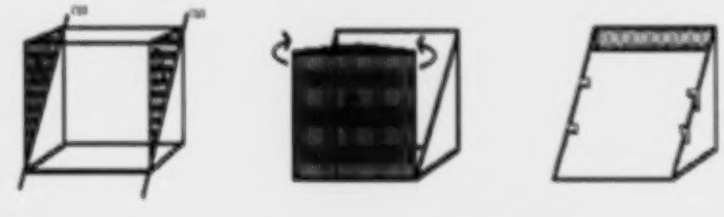
Make A Simple Table Easel

Easels offer a different perspective for art work. Unfortunately, wooden easels are costly and often involve making elaborate arrangements to get someone to make one for you. Here is a quick and easy way to construct a table easel.

Supplies: **a sturdy cardboard box, scissors and/or a knife with a serrated edge, sturdy adhesive tape.**

Process:

1. **Make diagonal cuts along two sides of the box as show in the first diagram.**
2. **Fold flaps A and B behind C.**
3. **Secure C to the bottom piece with tape.**



Step 1 **Step 2** **Step 3**

Reference: Ann Cole, Carolyn Haas, Betty Weinberger, *Purple Cow To The Rescue*, Little, Brown & Co., 1982.

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E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 8 / April 1995

Planning School Outings

School trips involve a change in routine and mean extra work for the adults involved. But a trip can be as simple as a walk to a nearby location, and a well organized trip provides an excellent opportunity for learning. The key to its success is advanced planning. The following is a general guide for out-of-school trips. You may want to use it to help organize your next trip:

Preparation

1. Make arrangements to ***visit the proposed site yourself,*** well in advance of your trip. Use this opportunity to "check it out." Ask yourself questions about the location: Does this tie-in with classroom activities? (Example, if you are studying animals a visit to a farm would tie-in, but a trip to the fire station would not.) Is the location safe for children? What will the children see and do? (Children need to be actively involved.) How will you get to the location and back... walk, take a bus, go by car? (Remember, travel time should not be too long for young children.) How long will the outing take? How many adults will be needed for proper supervision? ***Discuss what the children will see and do with the person in charge*** of the site. ***Arrange a suitable date*** for the class trip.

2. ***Arrange for transportation, extra adults, and parental permission.*** It is best to inform others of the trip in writing. Written permission should be required... forms should be signed and returned. This is a good way of insuring that everyone is properly informed about the trip and offers some protection for you.

3. The day before the trip ***confirm the date and time*** with all those who are to assist you. ***Remind children of the rules and the behaviour you expect.***

The Trip

1. ***Review the rules*** and the behaviour you expect with the children.
2. ***Give your volunteers an outline*** of the trip. You may want to assign certain children to certain adults.
3. ***Describe, point out details, and ask questions to help the children focus on particular things during the trip.***
4. Keep a constant ***check on the children*** to make sure no one gets lost!

After The Trip

1. ***Review highlights of the trip*** and use or display any material gathered while on the trip. Be sure to give the children time to discuss their experiences.
2. ***Write a thank you note*** to the person in charge of the location visited and have the children sign their names as best they can.

The following are some suggestions for school trips:

A farm or estate (animals & plants)
A fire station.
A beach (you might be able to make arrangements for the children to see fishermen pulling a seine).

Explore the community yourself to

See "Outings" Cont. page 3

Curriculum Kits

A small (but growing) number of kits and single item resources are available on loan to those holding ECE Connection membership cards. At present we offer the following:

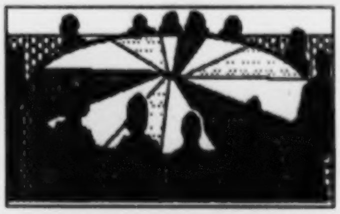
KITS

The Alphabet
Numbers
Fine Motor Resources (assorted scis sors, hole punches, plastic needles)

SINGLE ITEM RESOURCE

Parachute

For those not familiar with the parachute, this is a large circular object made from wedge-shaped pieces of brightly coloured nylon fabric. It is used outdoors, or where space permits indoors, for a variety of cooperative gross motor games and activities. ECE Connection's parachute is designed to be used by groups of twelve adults and/or children and comes with an instruction booklet.



For more information and/or to obtain your free membership card write to ECE Connection (address below).

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Editor's Note

Thank you to those who took the time to write in. Your letters are very much appreciated and help us to be more effective. We are particularly grateful to Parkview Preschool for sending in the following colourful science activity:

Bag Me A Rainbow

Material:

1 quart heavy duty sealable plastic bag (i.e. Ziploc)
Spoon
Rainbow Goop (see recipe below)
Masking tape

Method:

1. Open bag and spoon in all three colours of Goop.
2. Close bag. Now open just a little and push out all the air. Close bag and seal top with tape.
3. Now have child squeeze bag. "It's time to squeeze the rain bow... use both hands to squeeze the bag. Watch how the colours mix together and new colours appear. What are the colours in your bag?"

Rainbow Goop

Ingredients:

3/4 cup water
1 packet unflavoured gelatin
3 plastic cups or bowls
Red, yellow and blue, food colouring

Method:

In a small saucepan stir together water and gelatin. Let stand 5 minutes to soften gelatin. Cook and stir over low heat about 3 minutes or until gelatin dissolves. Remove from heat and divide mixture into three cups. Add 3 to 5 drops of colour, using a different colour for each cup. Mix well and chill in refrigerator 5 minutes or until partially set. Stir mixture during chilling.

Note: this mixture can also be used for finger painting.

End

INTEREST AREAS

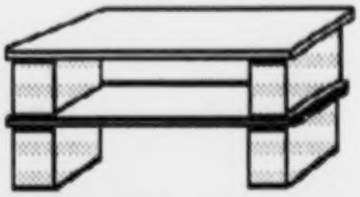
Last month's article on behaviour management and the classroom environment mentioned the subject of INTEREST AREAS. Quite simply, these are separate sections of the classroom that have been set up to allow small groups of children to explore and learn about a particular subject. As much as possible, learning in these areas is "hands-on." This means that the children learn by doing.

The first step in setting up interest areas is to decide what areas you want. Your layout will depend on the amount of space you have and the areas you feel are most important.

Generally classrooms that use the interest area approach are divided into the following: (1) Table Activities (puzzles, games, art, crafts, written work, etc.), (2) Building Blocks & Floor Toys, (3) Dress-Up and/or House Area, (4) Quiet Area (books, etc.), (5) Sand & Water Play (This last area is often outdoors).

Separating the different areas is another consideration. Keep in mind that you will want to keep the more active areas away from the quiet areas. Try different arrangements to see what works for you. You will also want the children to know where each area begins and ends. Furnishings can be used to divide the areas, as can tape or a line painted on the floor. A few suggestions follow:

1. Pushing several school desks or small tables together creates a larger table for group work, and also allows for more floor space.
2. Pieces of fabric pegged to a low clothes line make "privacy walls." The clothes line can hung between poles that have been placed in buckets of concrete or gravel.
3. A large cardboard box can be cut and decorated to make a quiet reading nook for one or two children.
4. Sturdy boxes with a plank of wood secured on top make long narrow tables or single shelves.
5. Concrete blocks and planks fastened together make shelves, as shown above.



It's important to remember that these items must be constructed in a way that does not pose a safety hazard. Do not build them too high (adults in the room need to be able to see into each area for supervision) and make them sturdy enough to support a child. Even though children are not supposed to climb on them, you want to think of safety first. Use your creativity to make these "home made" furnishing look attractive.

You will need to make it clear to the children how they are to use each area and how many of them can be in an interest area at the same time. Draw stick people and write the numeral to let the children know the limit. Each child should have turns in the different areas. (Generally children prefer one area but you can make the other areas interesting to attract the children's attention.)

Using interest areas does not mean that children never get together for larger group activities, or that they are always doing as they please. Group lessons are planned into the daily program and at other times the teacher divides her/his time between the areas, offering suggestions and assistance to encourage learning. Once the idea of interest areas becomes familiar to all, they serve to reduce problem behaviour by keeping everyone involved. Maximum child participation means children are more likely to attach meaning to what they are learning.

For more information on interest areas write to ECE Connection. End

Reference

Segal & Tomasello. Nuts & Bolts. Atlanta, Georgia: Humanics Ltd, 1981.

Some "Crafty" Ideas For April

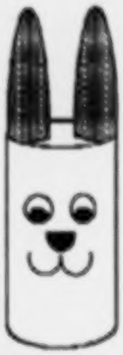
Several things come to mind when we think of this time of year. Religious celebrations, school holidays, yacht races, kites... For those who wish to include some seasonal activities in their program we offer a few suggestions.

This is kite season. Whether home made or purchased from a store or vendor, kites are a colourful addition to the landscape. Bring these interesting objects into your classroom. Better yet, make arrangements for someone to come in and make a kite so that the children can see how they are made. (If you know how to make kites all the better!) Be sure to have all the materials you will need at hand (flex, thread, tissue paper, scissors, glue). This makes the activity run smoothly and reduces waiting. We all know that young children have difficulty waiting! For very young children you might want to make parts of the kite ahead of time to reduce the time it will take to demonstrate the activity. Make the process more interesting by explaining (in simple terms) what is going on. Ask the children what they think... they might even be able to help.

Making a kite out of flex and tissue paper involves more than the average preschooler can manage. Instead, you may want to help the children make a cocoa leaf kite. To do this you will need enough cocoa leaves to give one to each child (and a few spares), light-weight string, and some fabric or plastic for a tail. Attach the string to one end of the leaf and the tail to the other. Now take the children outdoors to try their kites. Talk about what is happening.

Coloured eggs are traditional for this time of year. Hard boil the required number of eggs, or have each child bring in her/his own hard boiled egg. The eggs can then be dyed with food colouring or a mixture made by soaking bright coloured crepe paper in a cup of water. Add a teaspoon of vinegar to help the dye hold. Kool Aid drink crystals, a little water and vinegar also make a suitable dye.

Bunny puppets can be made out of cardboard cylinders (toilet rolls). To make each puppet all you need are two paper ears and a face, as shown. The face can be drawn or glued from bits of paper. A little cotton wool glued on the back of the puppet makes a bunny tail. Encourage each child's efforts. The children may want to use their puppets to perform the following rhyme:



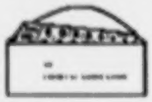
Sleeping Bunnies

See the little bunnies sleeping 'till it's
nearly noon.
Come and let me gently wake you
with a merry tune.
Why so still? Are you ill?
Wake up now!
And hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Stop little bunnies, stop, stop, stop.

Author unknown

Remember, your enthusiasm and encouragement make all the difference. Enjoy!

End



Salutations!

This section has been set aside to send a special greeting to the staff of ***Woburn Pre-school in St. George's.*** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Should a member of your staff write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (your letter must be postmarked before the end of April '95) a set of classroom incentive stickers will be mailed to your school.

Congratulations to Harvey Vale Pre-school whose name appeared in our February issue. We were delighted to receive their confirmation letter.

"Salutations" is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected from a computer generated list, so just because your name has been chosen once doesn't mean it won't be chosen again. If you're on our mailing list you are eligible. Look for next month's issue to see if your name appears. Good luck!

"Outings" (cont. from page 1)

learn what resources are available. Use the children's interests as your guide. Remember, learning is not restricted to the classroom. Some of the best learning happens when children are outdoors, doing things that interest them. Your interest and enthusiasm make all the difference. You are an important role model!

End

References
Spodek, Saracho & Davis. Foundations of E.C.E. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1987.
Linaberg & Swedlow. Young Children - Exploring and Learning. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, Inc. 1985.

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 9 / May 1995

STRESS

In our society the job of caring for young children is often taken for granted... after all, it's little more than "keeping an eye on a group of youngsters." Wrong! Besides being incorrect, this attitude belittles the importance of the work that teachers (and parents) do. Caring for children is the job of shaping the minds and bodies of future generations. There's not much that's more important.

Working with young children requires caring, creativity, enthusiasm and patience. It's a job that calls for a high degree of responsibility and commitment. Like any job, some teachers are more involved than others. One fact remains, at times the demands of teaching can be too much. Quite simply, working with young children and their parents can be stressful!

We all have stress in our lives. A certain amount of stress is necessary. It's what pushes us to get things done. Too much stress can be harmful. The result of long periods of stress can be a number of physical and mental difficulties. Problems with sleeping, headaches, stomach aches, angry outbursts. A high level of stress affects our ability to do our jobs, so what can we do about it?

We need to take care of ourselves. As easy as it sounds, those who care for others tend to forget about looking after themselves. We often put the needs of others (students, family, partners) ahead of our own, but we need a little care and attention too. The following is an outline of some things that we can do to help us deal with daily stress:

Eating a **balanced diet** is important. Not lots of food, but a sensible amount. We need to make sure to eat food from the four food groups (meat or meat substitutes, cereals, dairy products, fruits and vegetables.) Proper nutrition helps to maintain our good health.

Regular exercise is also necessary. Whether it's walking, swimming, gardening, or engaging in some form of sport, this helps to keep us fit and also provides a good way to release tension.

Getting enough **sleep** is also important. (Adults generally need about eight hours of sleep a night.) It's a lot easier to cope with the pressures of the school day when we've have had a good night's sleep.

Having a **short break** away

See "Stress" page 2

Self Esteem

Reflections by T. Nasus

Imagine for a moment that you are walking home one afternoon after work. You pass a plum tree laden with ripe fruit. Your mouth waters as you pass; so many plums, and they look so juicy. Without too much thought you reach out, pick a few, and pop one into your mouth. Mmmm it's sweet! Almost immediately a hand grabs your arm, and you receive several sharp slaps. You are dragged home where your family is told of your wicked deed. In fact, the next day members of staff are told of your theft and that you are no longer to be trusted... you deserve harsh punishment. How would you feel? The words shocked, ashamed, and hurt may come to mind.

Our feelings about ourselves, our sense of self worth, play a very important part in determining what we are capable of doing in life. We get our sense of who we are from the people who are closely connected to us. Parents or our caregivers first give us "feedback" (information about ourselves). As we move outside of our home environment others (neighbours, friends, teachers) tell us about ourselves. It's a bit like looking into a mirror, the mirror being the

See "Self Esteem" page 3

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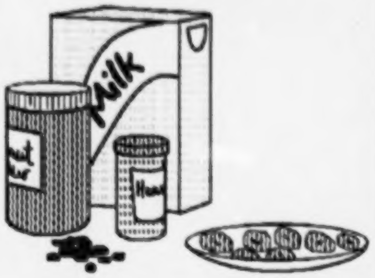
A No-Cook Recipe Your Students Can Prepare



Preparing food is a good way for children to practise social skills (sharing, taking turns, talking, listening...). It also provides an opportunity for sequencing (putting things in the correct order), following directions, using numbers (counting, measuring) and words. The following is a simple recipe that requires no cooking or refrigeration.

Utensils:
Unbreakable mixing bowl
Sturdy mixing spoon
Measuring cups (1, 1/2, 1/4 cup)
Unbreakable plate

Ingredients:
1 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup honey
3/4 cup powdered milk
Raisins

Method:
Mix together the peanut butter, honey and powdered milk. Form the mixture into small balls. Push a raisin into the centre of each ball. Serve. (Note: It may be necessary to adjust the recipe. If the mixture is too sticky add more milk powder, if it's too dry add a little more honey.)

You may want to write the recipe on a large sheet of paper and illustrate it. This provides a chart for the children to follow. Remember to let the children be involved in the preparation. Discuss what is going on and encourage each child's efforts. End

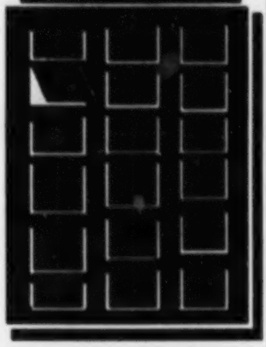
Reference: Wilmes, Liz & Dick. A Yearful Of Circle Times. Illinois: Building Blocks, 1989.

Peek-A-Boo Page

The following is a quick and easy activity that can be used to occupy a group of restless children or keep children busy while in between activities.

Supplies:
a pair of **scissors**
a sheet of fairly thick **blank paper**
an interesting **picture** (page of a magazine or picture book)
a few **paper clips**.

Method:
Cut little "window flaps" in the blank paper (as shown right). Place your picture (picture of an elephant shown above right) behind the page with the "windows" and hold it in place with paper clips. Lift the flaps one by one as the children try to guess what the picture behind is all about. This activity can be repeated with different pictures. Perhaps the children can take turns being the one to lift the flaps. To make the paper flaps sturdier you can reinforce them with tape. Have fun!



"Stress" (Continued from page 1)

from the noise and activity of the classroom is also helpful. Fifteen minutes to put your feet up, collect your thoughts, and have a glass of juice can make all the difference in how we view ourselves and the children in our classroom. It may take some creative planning to insure that the children in your class are supervised while you have your break, but it's worth it in terms of helping us to cope well.

Being organized, having a daily timetable and a monthly calendar of activities that lets us plan ahead, helps to lessen the stress of "surprises". Not only does planning help you, but it helps other members of staff, parents, and even the children in your care. Things go a lot more smoothly if everyone knows what is going on.

Keeping feelings bottled up inside creates ever-growing tension. Often **talking things over** can help us to see them in a different light. Teachers can get isolated and lonely in their jobs. This adds to the stress. Consider forming an informal support group that meets on a semi-regular basis. This group would offer its members the opportunity to share concerns and come up with solutions to problems.*

There's nothing quite like a good **laugh**, it not only reduces stress, but it can help to put things in a different light. Seeing the funny side of a situation can lessen tension and make things more bearable.

Having something to look forward to, no matter how simple, can us give that needed lift. When things seem to be weighing us down we need to look at ways that we can deal with the issues that are bothering us. We owe it to ourselves... and the children we work with will be better off for it. End

* Write to ECE Connection for more information on starting a support group. Our address is on page 1.

References: Cherry, Clare. Think of Something Quiet. California: David S. Lake Pub., 1980.
Baldwin, Sue. All Stressed Out. Scholastic: Early Childhood Education Today, November/December 1994.

Editor's Note

We are delighted to see that the kits and single item resources are being used. Those of you who have had a chance to borrow these items can offer valuable feedback. This helps us to make future kits and resources more helpful to you. We encourage teachers to apply for membership cards. These cards are needed to borrow curriculum kits and related resources. Write to ECE Connection (address bottom right corner of page 1) for details.

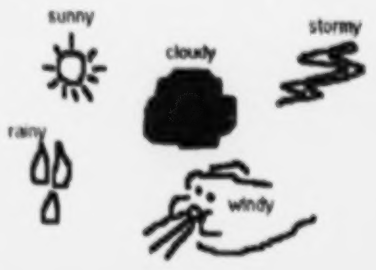
As of September 1995 ECE Connection will be updating its mailing lists. To make sure that newsletters are getting through and that they are of use to you we are asking our readers to fill in and return a questionnaire. Only those returning the questionnaire will be included in our updated files. ***In order to receive newsletters after our July '95 issue you need to return a questionnaire.*** *Look out for the questionnaire in your June newsletter.*

Salutations!

Greetings to the staff of ***LaFontaine School, St. George's.*** ECE connection is waiting to hear from you. Should a member of your staff write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (Your letter must be post marked before the end of May '95) a set of incentive stickers will be mailed to your school.

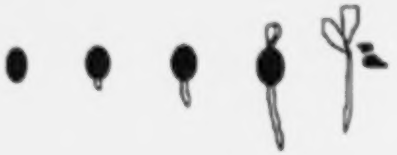
"Salutations" is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected from a computer generated list. If you are on our mailing list you are eligible. Look for next month's issue to see if your name appears!

Rainy Season



At this time of the year many adults are busy making plans for planting their gardens. You may want to draw attention to this fact and **discuss the upcoming rainy season with the children in your class.** Talk to them about the changes they will see. Perhaps you could keep a record of the weather using simple symbols and words on a calendar. Keep track of how many rainy days there are. Talk about what happens to the rain when it falls on the earth. **Discuss the many ways we use water.**

Planting seeds provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn about growing things. Watching a germinating seed change over a period of weeks can help to stimulate language development (discussing the process). Germination also provides an opportunity for practising sequencing skills (placing events in order). Sketches of the process (as shown) can be made into a game with separate cards for each step of the process. The children can then place the cards in the correct order. As much as possible try to have examples of the "real thing". Children learn best when they can use all of their senses (see, hear, touch, taste) to experience an activity. An egg box with a little soil in each of the egg cups makes a good seed nursery. Place the box in a sunny part of your classroom and let the children water the seeds. When the seedlings are big enough they can be transferred to a larger container or planted outside. Remember, your interest and enthusiasm encourage the children and make the activity an enjoyable learning experience. End



"Self Esteem" (Continued from page 1)

people who touch our lives. If the information we get about ourselves is that we valued and able, then we feel this way about ourselves. On the other hand, if the information we get is that we are bad, that we are worthless and that we can't do anything right, then this is how we see ourselves.

Raising caring, responsible children takes time and effort. The care and guidance that we give must develop their feelings of self worth. When we shame, humiliate, and ridicule a child we do just the opposite.

Our actions teach far more than our words. If we want to teach self control we must show self control. To teach honesty we must show honesty. To teach respect, we must show respect. Sometimes it's not easy, after all we aren't perfect, but it's important to give some thought to how our actions affect others. The children in our care learn about themselves from us. Our treatment of them must show them how to succeed (despite mistakes). It must show them that they are capable ("You can do it!"). They are worth it. End

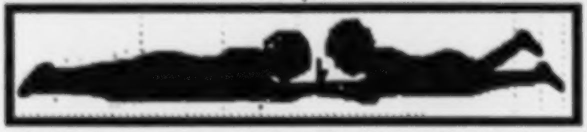
E.C.E. Connection

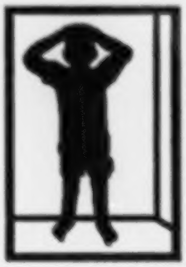
A Newsletter For Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 10 / June 1995

Seeing Children

by T. Nasus

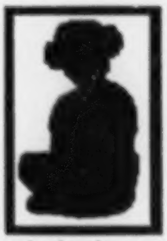
Take a minute to look at the three silhouettes shown below. Before you read any further, try to decide what's happening in each picture.





What do you see in the picture to the left? One child trying to comfort another? Two children sharing some crayons? How about the picture to the right? A child, hands on head, waiting for something? Perhaps he or she is being punished? Maybe just thinking? Now look at the picture below left. A child sitting cross-legged? Is the figure facing you, or is it turned away? What's happening in that individual's life? Happy? Sad? Paying attention, or lost in his/her own thoughts? Maybe you see something completely different.

There are no right or wrong answers. The object of this exercise is to get us thinking about what we see when we observe children.



We observe children all the time, taking in information through our senses (sight, sound, touch, smell). We then "interpret" or give meaning to what our senses tell us, and act upon that information. Let's say that you feel that the figure below left is a little girl sitting alone and sad. You might react to her behaviour by trying to comfort her. What if you feel she was intent upon listening to a story? You might decide to leave her alone. Observing children is important for a number of reasons, the primary reason being that we learn about them. It follows that when we learn about children we can better understand them. This helps us to provide the best supports for their growth and development.

It's important for us to try to understand what a child is experiencing. Sometimes it seems fairly obvious. A little girl who is gripping her genital area and hopping from one foot to the other likely needs to use the toilet. At times, there is more to the situation. Take for example if the little girl we refer to will not use the toilet when asked to do so. We might think that she's stubborn, and discipline her if she eventually soiled herself. Later on we might find out that she was afraid of using a strange toilet, or that she had a bladder infection. How we view children, and how we react to them, affects them. It's important for us to take the time to ***really see*** a situation, find the real reason for certain behaviours, and act in a manner that respects and nurtures. Hasty conclusions may not always be the right ones. End

Reference: Warren R. Bentzen, Seeing Young Children: A Guide to Observing and Recording Behavior, Delmar Publishers Inc., New York, 1985.

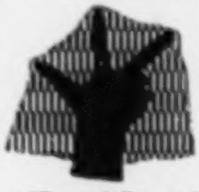
DON'T FORGET TO MAIL IN YOUR READER QUESTIONNAIRE (SEE PAGE 3).

Puppets

How do you like this puppet? It's a wooden spoon, all dressed up and ready to tell a class full of three year olds about table manners! Puppets are lots of fun. They also provide an excellent opportunity to help children develop language skills, learn concepts, and use their imaginations. A shy child can be encouraged to communicate through puppets. Puppets can help overactive children to settle down by using a puppet to distract them or to discuss their behaviour. Puppets even help teachers to overcome their feelings of discomfort when having to "perform" in front of a group!

You can make simple, inexpensive puppets from everyday objects. To help you get started ECE Connection has a copy of **The Muppets Make Puppets!** This fully illustrated book by Cheryl Henson offers readers step-by-step directions on "how to create and operate over 35 great puppets, using stuff from around your house." We encourage members to make use of this resource.

The following is a quick and simple idea for making a puppet. You'll need a paper cup, a 15" square piece of fabric, three rubber bands, and felt pens. Poke a hole in the bottom of the paper cup so that it will fit over your index finger. (The cup will be the puppet's head.) Drape the fabric over your hand with fingers spread as shown right. Secure the "hands" and "head" with



See "Puppets" page 4

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A "Paper Story"

This story is designed to be told while cutting a figure (made of a combination of basic shapes) from a sheet of paper. Cutting out the corresponding picture provides children with something to see while they listen to your words. (A pattern for the cut-out is provided to the right.) To perform this story you will need:

- *scissors*
- *a hole punch (a pin can also be used to make small holes around the area marked "X" so that it can be easily removed)*
- *a sheet of blank paper*

Practise telling the story while cutting your paper. This will make your performance run smoothly. (Note: The dotted line on the left hand side of the cut-out pattern is the fold line.)

The Shape Family

The Shape family works at the circus. They perform tricks for everyone to see. Right now, it is time for them to perform.

Father square comes on stage first. *(Cut on lines A, B, C and D. Then cut to the edge of the paper.)*

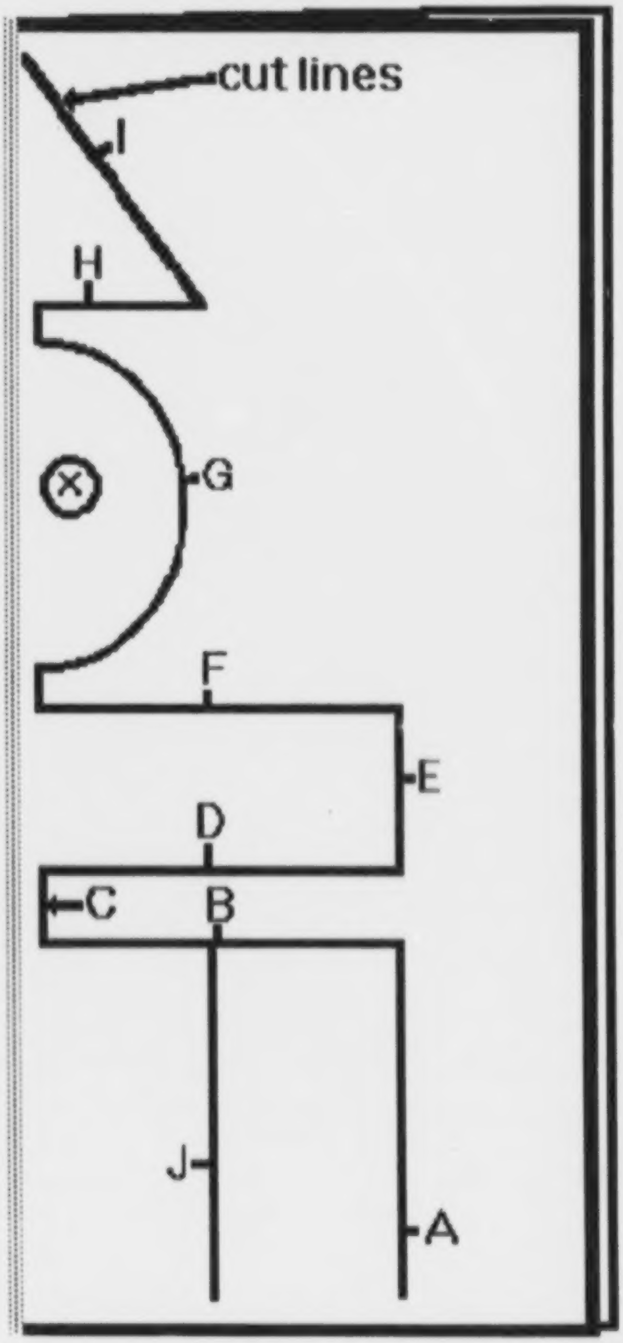
Big Brother Rectangle stands next to Father Square. *(Cut on lines E and F. Cut along line G from line F to H; then cut on line H to the edge of the paper.)*

Mother Circle stands next to Big Brother Rectangle. We can see only half of her because she is carrying Little baby Circle. *(Punch out X.)*

Sister Triangle stands next to Mother Circle and Little Baby Circle. *(Cut on line I.)*

How many members of the Shape Family can you find? *(Cut on line J and unfold.)*

Reference: Stangl, Jean. Paper Stories. Belmont, California: Pitman Learning, Inc., 1982



ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter, available free of charge to those who work with young children. Publications are intended to offer information and support.
Reader suggestions, comments, and questions are always welcome. Write to us at: ECE Connection, P.O. Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.

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Salutations!

Greetings to the staff of **Perdmontemps Pre-school, St. David's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Should a member of your staff write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (your letter must be postmarked before the end of June '95) a set of classroom incentive stickers will be mailed to your school.

Salutations is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected from a computer generated list, so just because your name has been chosen once doesn't mean it won't be chosen again. If you are on our mailing list you are eligible. Good luck to you all!

Sand

Sand provides hours of educational play for children in an ECE program. Children practise using their muscles when they dig, fill containers, pile and pour sand. Thinking skills are improved as children must consider the results of their actions when they use the sand and the objects in the sand area. Sand also offers the opportunity to practise social skills and is a relaxing activity for children. It may look like "play" but a lot of learning is going on. Your comments and questions can contribute to the learning experience: "That hole looks quite deep, tell me how you made it?" "What do you think will happen when you pile that bucket of sand on top of this one?"

Almost any large (unbreakable) container can be used to contain sand. A sturdy wooden box, a plastic tub, even an old baby's bathtub can be used. If you are lucky enough to locate a very large container your sand area can be permanently located outdoors. Large vehicle tires make excellent sand areas as the children can comfortably sit in the edge.

(Remember, it is against the law to take sand from Grenada's beaches. Sand must be purchased from the government and is obtained from the beach at Telescope.)

ECE Connection Reader Questionnaire

September's mailing list is being updated. In order to insure that newsletters are being sent to the correct address and are useful to you we ask that you fill out and mail the following questionnaire. Please print. ***Our readers should note that as of September, newsletters will be mailed only to those who have returned this questionnaire.***

Name of School or Institution: ______________________________

Phone Number: ____________ **Mailing Address of School or Institution:** ____________

____

Name of Contact Person (This should be the person who receives the newsletter and who is/will be responsible for the school's ECE Connection membership ID card):

____

ECE Connection ID Card Number: ________ **Number of Copies of Newsletter Needed:** ________

Number of Children in Program: ________ **Age(s) of Children Served by Program:** ________

Would you be interested in joining with others to form a Early Childhood Education Teacher's Association to promote professional development? Yes________ No________

Any questions, suggestions or comments? ______________________________

____

____

____

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E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Issue 11 / July '95

September Plans

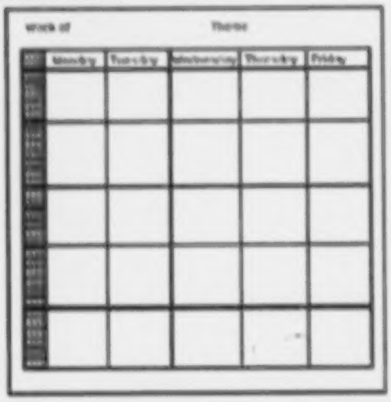
Now that your school year is winding down you might want to give some thought to some of the things that you can be working on in preparation for September. It's not too early to be making plans! Advanced planning helps to ensure that you have gathered the material you need and gives you time to work out the details for a calendar of activities.

A **planner** is a vital part of any program. Pre-printed planning books are available but can be expensive or difficult to find. A calendar or diary, with enough room to write in brief details about your program, works quite well. An exercise book can also make an effective planner. The following are some ideas to help you transform an exercise book into a planner:

Page 1 - Class information: name of each child; parent's names, address, phone number; emergency contact name and number, child's birth date.

Page 2 - Special information about each child (allergies, likes and dislikes, fears, etc.)

Page 3, 4, 5... - Weekly lesson plan charts. This includes your regular daily activities as well as special events. A sample outline page is shown below.



Week of Theme

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Note that the days of the week are listed along the top of the chart and that there is room for the times and/or the subject area to be included in the vertical (shaded) column on the far left hand side of the chart. (You may want to change the number of horizontal columns to suit your needs.)

The top of each weekly lesson plan page lists the week (Example, September 11th - 15th) and, if applicable, your weekly theme. (More on themes on page 3). Your students' birthdays, reminders to do certain things, etc. can also be recorded on this chart.

Remember, your daily program and the children's needs will determine what your chart looks like. Your plans may be changed and/or modified as the weeks go by, but a basic plan is an important part of a good program. Making your planner early gives you the opportunity to jot down suggestions and creative ideas as they pop into your head.

Advanced planning makes your job a lot easier. You may want to consider the following in preparation for next September:

* Have new students (those who will be starting in September) pay a short visit to your class in July, just to get a feel of what school is all about.

* Look for and collect posters and other interesting/attractive items to decorate your classroom. (Bright carnival costumes make interesting decorations!)

* Set some non-toxic plants in pots.

* Look-out for suitable places to take your class on field trips.

* Let others know that you are collecting items that can be used as classroom resources!

Your interest and creativity are your greatest asset. You'd be surprised by just how much can be done with very little. Just let those creative juices flow!

End

A Number Game

You may recall the following rhyme:

Lady bug, lady bug, fly away home
Your house is on fire, your children are gone

This is the basis of a simple game that helps children to match numerals with the corresponding number. The object of the game is to match the number of spots on the lady bug with the numeral on the "bug house".

You need: an egg box, some sticky tape, paper scrape, a felt-tipped marker, and a pair of scissors.

Cut out the desired number of egg cup portions and make a different number of large dots on each cup. Each of these will be a lady bug and can be decorated to make them more appealing (pipe cleaner antennae can be added, as shown below).

Now, write the corresponding numeral on a piece of paper and attach it to an empty container. This is will be the lady bug's house.

Using the rhyme as a reminder, ask the children to match the bug with the right house. Have fun!

This publication marks the end of our 1994/5 school year. (We resume publication in September '95.) To receive future newsletters we ask that you complete and return a reader questionaire (found in our June '95 newsletter). Questionaires are also available by writing to: ECE Connection, Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.

PS 026905

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Planning A Summer Program?

A summer program is a means for some to earn a little extra money. It can also offer a unique opportunity to explore different ways of working with children. Should you decide to run a summer program it is important to take the time to plan and organize.

For starters, decide who is going to run the program. The adults involved need to meet and discuss plans. Treat yourself to a few hours when there will be no interruptions, make juice and sandwiches and brainstorm. (Brainstorming involves everyone giving their ideas.) Write down all ideas, even the ones that sound a bit "off the wall". Once all ideas are recorded then you can go over them one at a time and decide whether they are practical or of interest. You will want to consider ideas under the following headings: **Location, Dates & Times, Cost, Materials & Supplies, Program Schedule, Trips, Information to Parents.**

First, *location*, establish where your program is to be held. Is the school building available? What alternatives are there? Are these alternatives suitable for the children?

Second, decide on the *dates* you will offer your program. One, two, three... weeks? Consider what's best for you and for the parents/guardians that you will serve. Remember to set your dates so that they don't conflict with special events, for example carnival. Summer *program hours* may start later and end earlier, but you may choose to accommodate the hours of working parents.

Cost is an important factor. You want you make it worth your while, but you also want to make your fee attractive to your clients. Figure out any expences, including staff wages, and the number of children you can comfortably accommodate. Remember that a summer program will involve more outdoor activities so supervision must be considered when planning how many children you can accommodate.

Materials? This depends on what you decide to offer in the way of a program. Parents can supply certain materials, but you may want to buy and/or collect certain supplies.

Trips off site need special planning, well in advance of the actual date (see article on Planning School Outings. ECE Connection April 1995 newsletter). An alternative is to invite a special guest to visit your school. Make sure that there is lots for the children to see and do. Children don't handle long lectures too well!

You may want to use the *program schedule* outline described on page 1 of this newsletter. Remember that your group of children are likely in need of a more relaxed pace. Alternate structured and unstructured activities and be flexible. Rushing through something just so that you can get to the next activity may not be in the children's best interest.

Providing *information to parents* helps to keep them informed and lets them support your program. Make an outline of your plans and provide copies for each parent. (List the child's needs... you might want to include a suggestion that the children wear or bring old play clothes!)

Don't be afraid to experiment with ideas. Some work, others don't. The children will let you know! Just remember that it's okay to drop the ideas that don't work. That's not failure, it's learning. (A note of caution when experimenting: **safety first!**)

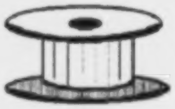
Use the outdoors as much as possible and have the children actively involved. You may want to plan around a particluar theme (see page 3) to help you organize. Above all, the experience should be enjoyable, so plan and get set for a fun filled summer program. End

Outdoor Spaces

Often, limited time and budgets prevent us from doing much with our outdoor spaces. Playgrounds are generally grass/mud covered with a tree or two, some shrubs, and (if we're lucky) perhaps a swing. But learning happens outdoors too.

The summer is a good time to improve your playground. For some, the absence of children allows time to collect items and set-up. Being the growing season, grass and shade trees can be established. The following are some inexpensive ideas that can help transform your outdoors into a creative area for children to explore:

Large wooden *spools* make great tables.



Tires can be used to make an obstacle course, a climber, swings, etc. A wooden fence post and a few tires make an interesting climber.

An *old row boat*, partially buried, stimulates a lot of imaginative play.

Tree stumps, or whole *tree trunks* can be placed near to each other and used as climbers.

Ropes, suspended from sturdy tree boughs and knotted stir the imagination.

Providing a variety of large, stable items makes your outdoor area interesting. Ask others for suggestions, and experiment with items you can scrounge. Just remember that **safety must be your prime consideration**. End

Write to ECE Connection for more information on planning and setting-up an educational outdoor play space. (Address on bottom right of page 1.)

Editor's Note

Thank you to those who have offered support and encouragement during the past eleven months. Through ECE Connection I've had the chance to work (long distance) with a few very caring and dedicated individuals. My heart-felt thanks to our team.

In the coming school year we plan to expand our curriculum kits and related teacher resources. Plans for an association, promoting professional development, are also "in the works".

I encourage you to make the effort to stay in touch. To receive future newsletters readers need to fill out and return a reader questionnaire. If you have not already done so, please mail in your completed form. A copy of the questionnaire was included in the June newsletter and extra copies can be obtained by writing to ECE Connection (address on page 1). Please note that there is likely to be a delay in correspondence from our office during the summer months. Normal communication will resume in early September.

Have a safe and pleasant summer holiday!

Salutations!

Greetings to the staff of **Chantimelle Pre-School, St. Patrick's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Should a member of your staff write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (your letter must be postmarked before the end of July 95) a set of incentive stickers will be mailed to your school.

Salutations is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected from a computer generated list, so just because your name has been chosen doesn't mean it won't be chosen again. If you are on our mailing list you are eligible.

"Themes"

A theme, or unit as it may be called, is generally a collection of activity ideas on a particular subject, or skill. Examples of theme topics: animals, colours, kindness, carnival, families. (ECE Connections' curriculum kits are organized according to themes.) A theme may be used for a day, a week, or longer. Even if you don't organize your program around themes, you've probably found that certain topics can be used to stimulate the children's interest.

To develop a particular theme, first try to establish what the children's interests are. Next, try to use your "topic" in each of your program areas. (language, maths, science, arts & crafts, fine & gross motor skills, outdoors, etc.) Think of how you can include your theme in these subject areas.

There are benefits to planning with themes. One of the most useful is that children of different abilities are able to explore at their own level because of the number of activities using the same idea. This approach also allows teachers to focus on and collect the right material and supplies.

The following is an example of "a day in the life of a theme". The focus for the week has been *plants*. Earlier in the week the children planted seeds in paper cups filled with soil. They have been watering them every day. The day before they had been on a walk to a nearby vegetable garden and had seen, heard about, and tasted different plants. This is the wrap-up to their week of plants. Note - This information includes only the day's activities that are plant related:

Friday, July 21

Art Activity:* *paint leaves and make leaf prints on paper

Gross Motor:* *Children pretend they are tiny seeds that have been planted then, as the teacher waters them, they slowly grow into big, beautiful, flowering plants. Children and teacher go outdoors and try to find plants that the teacher describes (Example, "This plant has large yellow flowers, with five petals, the leaves are very dark green and are long and thin...")

Group Circle Time Activity:* *Children observe their seed cups and discuss any changes. Teacher also has children help to compose a thank you note to the owner of the garden and all children attempt to sign their names.

Science:* *Children look for seeds in friut collected during yesterday's trip.

Be sure to keep your ideas current and in tune with what the children are interested in. Be flexible, and encourage lots of child participation. The children may even offer suggestions that you may find helpful! Remember, they are more likely to learn when the topic and activities offer them lots of hands-on experiences and holds their attention. End

In Our September Issue....

- **Back-to-school ideas to help your students feel at home.**
- **Information on new additions to our Curriculum Kits and Teacher Resources.**
- **Salutations changes its format.**
- **New ideas and services.**

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Vol. 2 - Issue 1 / Sept. 1995

A CURRICULUM KIT

What's In It For You?

For those who aren't familiar with ECE Connection's curriculum kits, a kit is a collection of reusable resources put together to provide teachers with additional ways to encourage children's learning of a particular skill or subject area.

In April of 1995 ECE Connection introduced the first of its Curriculum Kits. Thanks to Anne Watkins (VSO) of Grensave, who facilitated their distribution, we were able to offer:

The Alphabet
Numbers
Fine Motor Skills

The popularity of these initial kits has encouraged ECE Connection to provide additional material. We are pleased to announce that starting at the end of September the following kits will be available:

Colours & Shapes
My Body... All About Me
Domestic Animals

Three more **Fine Motor Skills** kits have also been added to the selection. This will provide easier access to the safety scissors, holes punches and needles that these kits contain.

To give you an idea of what a kit contains here is an inventory list of one of our kits. This kit is entitled

Domestic Animals

Plastic Carry Case
Resource & Inventory Booklet
7 Children's Story Books
Mix & Match Animal Puzzles
Ravensburger Animal Puzzle
Dog Hand Puppet
5 Animal Stencils
Set of Mini Farm Animals
20 Playmobile Animal Figures
Animal Flash Cards
7 Animal Sponge Shapes

In addition to the curriculum kits, a selection of single item resources will also be available these include:

Parachute (Available immediately, and used to promote gross motor, social, and communication skills)

Aquaplay (A water play cen-

Continued on page 3

Editor's Note

ECE Connection's Anniversary Edition

We're back and by the looks of things we have a great year ahead. Our expanded services now include more teaching materials. (See article to left.) Supportive workshops and the formation of an ECE Teacher's Association are among the items we will be working on this coming school year.

On a more personal note we would like to thank those individuals whose assistance (financial and otherwise) has enabled us to do what we do. Many hours of hard work and dedication go almost unnoticed, but we would like our supporters to know that without you there would be no ECE Connection.

We encourage readers to keep in touch. Your feedback helps us to be more effective. It is through sharing and supporting each other that we help ourselves. This in turn helps children... our future.

ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Comments, questions or suggestions are welcome. Write: ECE Connection, P. O. Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.

PS 026905

O'Grady Says...

The following suggestion was given by the father of one of this newsletter's contributors. I would like to thank him for reminding us that often the old ways, that we may have forgotten, have great educational value.

The game is called "O'Grady Says" (also known as "Simon Says"). To play, children gather around the teacher ("the caller"). The teacher then says, "O'Grady says..." and gives the children a simple directive. (Example, "O'Grady says, put your hands on your head.") The children then follow her/his directions. The teacher continues to give directions but from time to time does **not** include the words "O'Grady says..." before the instruction. The children are to obey the instruction only when it begins with the words "O'Grady says...". Those that follow directions given without the words "O'Grady says..." must sit down. The game continues until all players have been eliminated. (For younger children it is helpful for the caller to show the desired action along with the verbal instructions.)

This game exercises children's minds and bodies. Listening skills are developed as the children move parts of their bodies to comply with the verbal directions. Older children may be able to take turns giving instructions to the rest of the group. Be sure to encourage everyone's efforts. Children learn far more when they feel good about themselves.

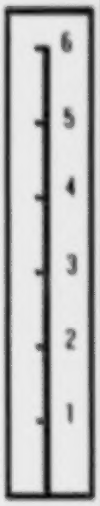
Make A Growth Chart

To come to an understanding about measurement children need to see, hear, speak about, and practice measuring things. This lays the foundation for later understanding of standard measurement (inches, centimeters, cups, pounds, etc.).

A child's early experience with the concept of measurement involves **naming** things. Example, the "tall cupboard", the "big boat". It's not until later on that a child becomes aware that these words are used to **compare** things.

The beginning of your school year is a good time to conduct the first in a series of measuring activities with your students. In order to do this you'll need a ruler or tape measure. You may want to make a growth chart on which you can mark each child's height. This chart can be attached to a wall, door, or cupboard.

To make your chart, glue several pieces of blank paper together to make a long strip of paper. Next, measure and make markings showing feet and inches or centimeters (as shown below right). You may want to decorate your chart to make it more attractive. Now attach it to a vertical surface (ie. the wall).



One way to introduce this measuring activity is to have another adult measure *you*. This shows the children what is going to happen when *they* are measured. Next, ask for volunteers and (one at a time) have your students stand tall with their heels to the wall. Mark off where the top of their head reaches on your chart. Point out where you have written their names and tell them their height.

Try to avoid letting the exercise become a competition to see who is the tallest or shortest. Emphasize that each child is being measured so that s/he can see how much they have grown the next time they are measured. (As a follow-up to this activity measure the children again in a few months to see the charges that have taken place. Discuss these changes.)

Everyday items can be used to measure objects in the classroom, for example, it takes five egg boxes to go from one end of the table to the other. Point out and discuss comparisons, example, "This tree is taller than the school roof." "This is the smallest crayon in your pencil case." Practice of this type lays the foundation for later understanding of more abstract concepts involving comparison with numbers.

Reference: Madaras, Lynda. Child's Play. California: Peace Press Inc., 1977.

Curriculum Kits

(Continued from page 1)

tre used to promote the development of fine motor skills, cognitive skills, language and social skills.)

Mega Blox (Large plastic building blocks used to promote the development of fine motor skills, cognitive skills, language and social skills.)

A growing selection of **Teacher Resource Books** and **Children's Story Books** will also be available. The children's books address issues that children may face and include: a visit to the dentist or doctor, self esteem, moral issues, death, sexual abuse, AIDS, etc..

ECE Connection's kits and related resources are available to teachers holding valid ECE Connection ID cards. ID Cards can be obtained by writing to ECE Connection (address bottom right corner of page 1). The kits etc. are held at the Ministry of Education (St. George's) and can be signed out for periods of two weeks. There is no charge for borrowing the kits, but teachers are responsible for their safekeeping.

End

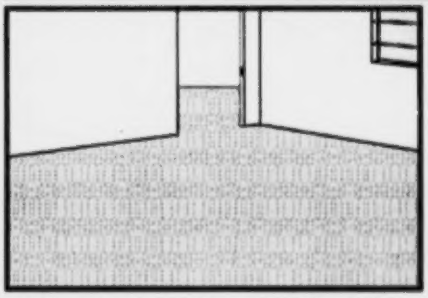
ECE Connection now has access to a phone number. Should you wish to leave a message you can do so at

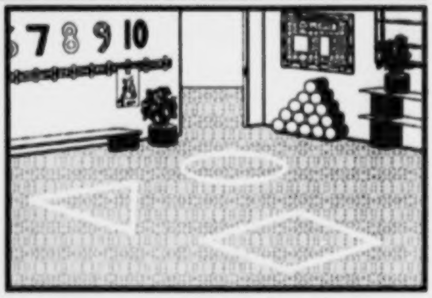
444-4227

Don't forget to mention that you are calling for ECE Connection.

Great Beginnings

by T. Nasus





Shown above is a sketch of the corner of an empty classroom. Above right is the same view twenty-four hours later. The classroom is being prepared for the arrival of this year's class of fifteen preschoolers. See if you can locate the following additions:

1. Large numeral cut-outs made from sheets of wrapping paper.
2. Picture hanging clips made from a strip of wood to which wooden clothes pegs have been attached. (Note, a *sturdy piece of string stretched tight between two nails can also be used to display pictures. Clothes pegs or paper clips make cheap, reusable clips.)*
3. Shelves made from painted concrete blocks and planks of wood.
4. Plants, potted in a large cans that have been painted in bright oil based colours.
5. Cubby hole cans, made by nailing five (large) empty tin cans to a board. Subsequent layers of cans have been piled on top in a pyramid shape and secured. Each can is then labelled and used as an individual storage "cubby".
6. A notice board for keeping parents and staff up to date.
7. Large shapes (circle, triangle, square) painted onto the floor with oil paint.

Tables and chairs have not yet been placed in the room, but the classroom is being transformed into an interesting and inviting place. An attractive room welcomes and encourages our students, and does a lot to lift our spirits.

It takes time and creativity to get a classroom organized. Give yourself time to set things up. It may be necessary for you to make a few visits to your room ahead of the arrival of your students. Try to make arrangements to get into school a few days before school starts.

Don't forget to use your ceiling space when you decorate. One school I visited used fishing line to suspended some brightly coloured kites from the ceiling, the effect was fabulous. A few yards of fabric pinned loosely to the ceiling splashes colour across what is generally an unsightly area. (Ceilings are the forgotten areas of most classrooms). Another idea is to get hold of discarded carnival head dresses and use them as decorations. The reaction of the children is quite surprising.

For children who are starting school for the first time, school can be a strange and perhaps overwhelming experience. The following are some suggestions that can help to make the first few days a little easier for those

Continued on page 4

Potato Printing

There are many ways to introduce paints to young children. Standard water colour paint sets and paint brushes are probably the most common, but how about painting with a potato? Yes, potato printing!

All you need for this activity are:

- *paper*
- *thick water-based paint*
- *a shallow container, to hold the paint*
- *a knife*
- *a few (old) potatoes*

Cut the potatoes in half and carve a simple shape or design into the cut surface (example shown below).

Now have the children dip the cut surface into the container of paint, then print the design on their paper. The effect can be quite attractive, but don't be too concerned with how their design looks. It's more important that they experience what happens when they dip the potato into the paint and print on their paper (cause and effect) and for them to learn about the materials that they are using (the properties of liquids,solids, etc.) Their minds are hard at work solving problems and storing information as they experiment with the materials you have provided.

It may be of interest to note that this form of printing can be used by adults to decorate the walls of a classroom or to illustrate words and numerals.

Salutations!

Thanks to the generosity of some of our supporters we've been able to modify our Salutations Gift. A selection of school related items, all tucked into a re-usable string bag, is now available to the person/school featured in our monthly newsletter. Each month one name will be chosen at random. If we receive written confirmation before the end of the month, the person/school in question will receive their bag of goodies.

It should be noted that only the names of those who returned an ECE Connection reader questionnaire (June '95 newsletter) have been entered into our computer.

Greetings to **Judith Henry of Corinth Pre-school, St. David's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter (your letter must be postmarked before the end of September '95).

Survey Results

In our June '95 newsletter ECE Connection included a reader questionnaire. This document was designed to let us know whether newsletters are being received by those working with young children. Included in the survey were questions intended to give us a better understanding of your needs.

At the time of publishing this issue *thirty-three* questionnaires had been returned. Thank you to those who took the time to give us much needed feedback. Your letters help us to be more effective. A special thanks for your words of encouragement... it's nice to hear that our efforts are appreciated.

Great Beginnings (Continued from page 3)

who may have difficulty saying goodbye to their parent or caregiver:

1. Try to have items that are familiar to the child available in your room. (Dolls, cars, or "home" related items.)
2. Greet each child at the door and let them know that you are pleased to see them.
3. Stoop down to their eye level when you speak with the children.
4. Let them know that you understand how they feel when they are sad. "It's okay to be a bit sad. Going to a new school can be scary at first."
5. Children need to feel some sense of control over what is going on. Giving them information ahead of time helps them to feel secure.
6. Above all, be patient and positive. Your attitude and sensitivity to the needs of each child is important.

End

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Vol. 2 - Issue 2 / Oct. 1995

More Than *A B C* and *1 2 3*

What should young children know before they start school? What should they learn in an early childhood education (ECE) program? How should they be taught? These questions are on the minds of most parents and teachers. Opinions as to what's best range from open, child-centered curriculum to highly structured, teacher directed programs.

Despite the variety of ECE philosophies, most adults are impressed by a young child who knows his/her letters and numbers, can legibly copy these symbols, and can recognize the printed word. It's a source of pride for parents and teachers alike. These indicators of academic success help us to feel satisfied with a child's learning. Unfortunately we are less certain about the benefits of promoting children's abilities in other areas of development.

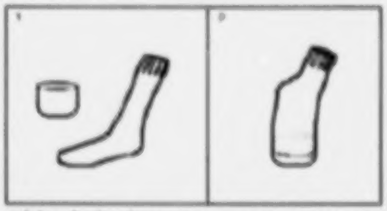
We know that children's growth and development can be divided into a number of distinct (but closely related) areas. There are observable changes in the physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional maturity of every child. To provide for development of the whole child consideration must be given to each of these areas. When we emphasize development of only one or two areas others can be neglected. The risk here is that we may be creating problems. As an example, consider a child who has been "pushed" into early toilet training. Sam's parents are thrilled to be able to say that he no longer wears diapers and at age thirteen months is completely toilet trained. Later Sam begins to have accidents and starts to hide when he needs to use the toilet. As many experts now tell us, if we wait for signs of readiness from the child we are far more likely to experience success.

We seem to be in a hurry to teach preschool children their letters and numbers. We want to have them reading and writing earlier and to fit them into a schedule that says that they will be successful only if they concentrate on academics, "the ba-

See *"More Than ABC..."* page 2

Ever Heard of a Feely Sock?

The name sounds strange, but you've probably used this teaching strategy in some other form. A Feely Sock helps to develop a child's tactile sense (the sense of touch) and enhances language and cognitive (mental) development. To make a feely sock all you need is an old sock (clean and in good repair) and a small plastic container (as shown in figure one below). Push the container into the sock (as shown in figure 2). Now, place a familiar object (a toy car, a crayon, a leaf) into the container and have one child at a time put her/his hand into the sock to feel the object. You could say:



See "Feely Sock" page 2

ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Comments, questions and suggestions are welcome. Write : ECE Connection, P.O. Box 187, St. George's, Grenada. Phone messages can be left at: 444-4227.

PS 026905

Salutations!

Greetings to Wendyla Mitchell of River View Pre-Primary School, St. George's. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of October '95.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

Salutations is a regular feature of this newsletter. Each month the name of a teacher/school is chosen from a computer generated list. If you returned a reader questionnaire (see June '95 edition) you are eligible. Check next month's issue to see if your name appears.

Feely Sock (cont. page 1)

"Tell me how it feels. What do you think it is? Take it out and let your eyes help you to find out what you were *touching*."

Did the child guess correctly? Change the object in the sock and repeat the process. Place an unusual object in the sock and see what happens!

Your comments and attention to what the children are saying help to broaden language skills and extend the experience. Children can even play this game amongst themselves. It's a simple way to learn about the different properties of familiar objects. It's also an enjoyable way to learn. End

I Spy With My Little Eye...

"I spy with my little eye something beginning with B." Many will be familiar with this simple children's game. You may have played it as a child. The nice thing about the game is that it needs no props and can be played almost anywhere.

To play I Spy someone must be **the caller**. The caller chooses a familiar and visible item/object, keeps it in mind, and then repeats the phrase *"I Spy...* (see italics above). Remember that the letter of the alphabet chosen must be the first letter in the name of the object chosen. Let's say that the item you have chosen is a book, you would repeat the phrase *"I spy..."* (above). Players then try to guess the name of the item. They may guess "ball", "bag", "bike", "bear". The winner is the one who guesses the correct name.

This game is probably too sophisticated for younger children but can be modified to include the first **sound** in the word. Example, *"I spy.... something that* ***sounds like*** *Bu (say the first sound of the word)."*

For very young children the game can be modified to have the children look for particular colours, shapes, or objects. (Example, *"I spy... something that is made of paper and that we read."*) This game challenges children's mental abilities and is an opportunity to reinforce some of the concepts that are being explored. It is important to make the game interesting but not so difficult that it becomes frustrating. Encourage everyone's efforts and keep the atmosphere lighthearted and cooperative.

More Than ABC... (continued from page 1)

sics". Why? Is it to give them a head start? To give them a better chance in this competitive world? Is it to show parents that our programs are superior? To satisfy ourselves that we are doing our job?

There is nothing wrong with young children learning their letters and numbers. There is nothing wrong with young children reading and writing. The difficulty lies in the fact that when we "push", when we drill children and in effect "force feed" academics we may stifle their natural desire to learn. We may be neglecting the other, equally important, areas of development.

Our programs must enhance all areas of development. They must foster a child's natural curiosity and encourage learning through exploration and experimentation. The words of George Bernard Shaw offer an important reminder: ***What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.***

Article written by T. Nasus. In next month's issue we will look at preschool curriculum and discuss children's learning in the early years.

Curriculum Kit Update

We apologize for the slight delay in the availability of our new kits and resources. Due to shipping dates these items will not be not available until mid October. As mentioned in the September '95 issue of ECE Connection, the following kits have been added to those already available:

Fine Motor Skills (3 more)
Colours & Shapes
My Body... All About Me
Domestic Animals
Aquaplay
Mega Blox

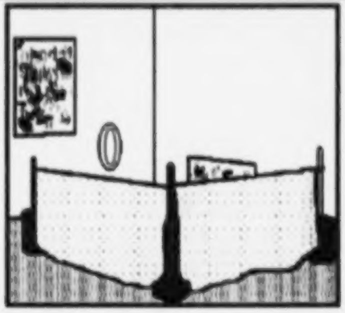
A selection of teacher resource books and children's books is also available. We feature two of these books below:

The Berenstain Bears Go To The Doctor by Stan & Jan Berenstain. This lighthearted book about a bear family broaches the subject of a visit to the doctor. The bear cubs go for a checkup and shots. Both Mama and Papa bear go along too, but Papa is reluctant to see the doctor!

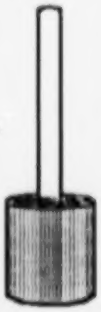
The Berenstain Bears Visit The Dentist by Stan & Jan Berenstain. Another story about the bear family. Sister bear has a loose tooth. Brother and sister bear go to the dentist for a checkup.

Future newsletters we will feature additional titles available from ECE Connection. Contact us for details. (Address and phone number on page 1.)

A Private Space



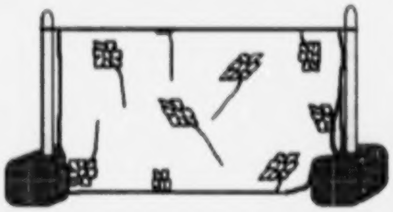
Adults aren't the only ones who experience stress. Children too can become stressed by their daily experiences. The children in your class may get overexcited from the noise and activity of a busy room or become overwhelmed by the demands of the school day. To make things easier on both teachers and students it's helpful to provide children with the opportunity to "take a break". A bit of unstructured outdoor time gives them a chance to "blow off steam" and to refocus. The opportunity for free play, indoors or outdoors, often gives a child time to "collect her/his thoughts". This helps to prevent things from building up and getting out of control. Providing a small private space is another option that can let a child "get away" for a short period of time.



Finding this space isn't as difficult as you might think. A few concrete blocks or large cans filled with gravel can be made into a stand for a short pole (see diagram left). Two or three of these poles, a bit of rope/twine and some fabric are all you need. String the twine in between two poles and hang the fabric over the twine to create a low wall (see diagram bottom right). Two such "walls" in the corner of your room (shown above right) make a cozy nook. Place some interesting pictures on the wall of your private space, add a mat and/or a few cushions, and presto... a private space.

It's important to keep this space for quiet activities (looking at books, doing a puzzle, etc.). Allow only one, maximum two children, to use this space at a time. Make this a place children think their own thoughts and have some pleasant time alone or with one friend. **Never use this area as a place that children are sent when they misbehave.** This area is meant to prevent problem behaviour rather than be associated with punishment.

Establish guidelines for the use of this private space and let your students know that it is there to help them when they need it.



E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Vol. 2 - Issue 3 / Nov. 1995

New Kits Arrived!

At long last the new Curriculum Kits are here. The following kits are now available on loan: **Colours & Shapes, My Body... All About Me, Domestic Animals, Fine Motor Skills** (3 more kits), **Mega Blox, Aquaplay**. A selection of teacher resource books and children's story books is also available. We will feature some of these titles in our monthly newsletters.

Book Feature

Make It With Boxes by Joan Irvine is one of the Connection's teacher resource books. This easy to understand and clearly illustrated book is full of ideas on how to turn boxes into costumes, games, puppet stages, props...

Why Do I Have To Wear Glasses? by Sandra Lee Stuart is a children's book that takes a light hearted look at why glasses are necessary for some children.

Supplies

Also available is a small supply of powdered paint and good quality children's safety scissors. Teachers holding valid ECE Connection ID cards can obtain these from Grensave (440-2448) while supplies last.

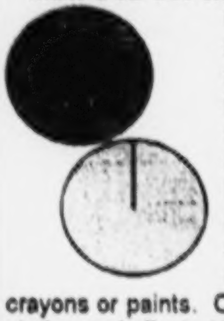
ECE Connection is published monthly to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Suggestions, questions, etc. are welcome. Write: ECE Connection, Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.
Phone messages can be left at 444-4227. Someone from ECE Connection will contact you.

Holiday Season Crafts

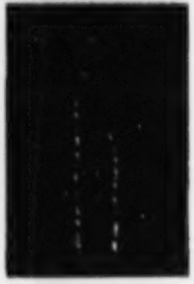
The holiday season is just around the corner. For busy teachers it's not too soon to be making plans to do something special next month. It takes time to collect the material you will need, so start early.

Many of the children in your class will celebrate Christmas, but the means to do so varies greatly between families. For others this season signifies an alternate celebration or does not hold any particular significance. It's important for you to respect these differences. Your attitude models respect and tolerance for the children in your classroom.

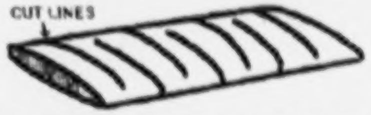
The following are a few suggestions of things you may want to add to your holiday programming:

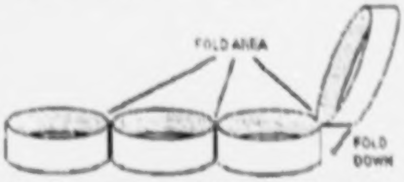


- Make a 3D tree ornament out of decorated cardboard circles. Cut two identical circles, as shown left. Have your students decorate the circles with crayons or paints. Cut slits in the circles, as indicated by the straight lines in the illustration above, and slide the circles together along the slits. Attach string and you have an attractive 3D sphere.



- Pin hole silhouettes give an interesting effect when mounted in a sunny window. Using dark coloured construction paper, draw a simple holiday design on the paper. Place the paper on a pliable surface (a cork board, a piece of carpet, or a towel) and have the children poke small holes in the paper outlining the design.
- Toilet rolls can be made into holiday chains. Have the children colour or paint the outer surface of their rolls. Flatten the roll and make partial cuts about 1/4" apart, as shown below. Now pull the roll apart and fold the circles back onto themselves (at the point at which they are joined) to form a chain as shown below.





- Very young children will enjoy making a greeting card using potato print designs (details in Sept. '95 issue). Try the following simple designs: a candle, a tree, a candy cane. (Illustrations page 2.)

See "Crafts" page 2

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Learning All The Time

Last month's issue introduced the subject of *whole education...* including all areas of a child's development in early childhood education (ECE) programs. This month we take a brief look at curriculum and learning.

Effective ECE programs begin by establishing goals. These goals serve as a guide to help teachers (and parents) understand the reasons behind program activities. According to Morrison (1991) ECE goals should consider the following areas: social skills, self-help skills, building self-image, academics, thinking, learning readiness, language, and nutrition. These goals take into account certain broad concepts:

Social Goals

* Helping children learn how to work with and get along with others.
* Helping children to learn to help others and develop caring attitudes.

Self-help Skills

* Modeling for children how to take care of their personal needs (dressing, grooming, personal hygiene, etc.)

Self-image Goals

* Promoting self help skills to help children develop a good self-image.
* Helping children to learn about self, family and culture.
* Developing a sense of self-worth by providing experiences for success and competence.
*Teaching about body parts and their function.

Academic Goals

* Teaching children to learn their names, where they live, etc.
* Facilitating children's learning of colours, sizes and spatial location (i.e. above, near, beside)
* Facilitating children's learning of numbers, pre-writing skills, shape identification, letter recognition, sounds, and rhyming.
* Providing for small muscle development.

Thinking Goals

* Providing for development of the following concepts: classification, seriation, numeration, space, time.

Learning Readiness Goals

* Assisting in the development of the following skills: following directions, working independently, listening to the teacher, developing attention span, learning to stay with a task until it is completed, controlling impulses.

Language Goals

* Providing the opportunity to develop oral language and conversation skills through interaction with teacher and peers.
* Helping children increase their vocabularies.

Nutrition Goals

* Providing the opportunity for children to learn the role of good nutritional practices.

Included in program goals, and of great importance, must be a program's commitment to encourage independence and build in each child an interest in and a love of learning.

Once general program goals have been established program planning is the next step. Written plans provide a framework to guide program activities. They are the "road map" to goals. According to Yeates (1994) plans include long-range, weekly and individual activity plans.

Long-range plans should be flexible but provide information about upcoming activities.

Weekly plans should provide a framework for planning daily activities. (Weekly themes, etc.)

Individual plans should provide detailed guidelines for specific activities and assist in evaluating those experiences.

More detailed information about curriculum planning can be obtained by writing to ECE Connection. (Address page 1)

Article written by T. Nasuk. References:

Morrison, George. Early Childhood Education Today. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1991.
Yeates, Marilyn et al. Administering Early Childhood Settings. Ontario: Maxwell Macmillan Canada Inc., 1994.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Thelma Cuffie of Belle Isle Pre-primary, St. David's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us (address bottom right corner of page 1) confirm receipt of this newsletter. Your letter must be postmarked before the end of November '95. Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

To have your name included in our monthly draw you must be on our current mailing list. For details contact ECE Connection.

Crafts (cont. from page 1)

*** Teachers and their students may find it fun to have a daily draw during December. Simple seasonal activities can be written on separate scraps of paper (example below). Each day a student picks one of these "chits". The class then does the activity. Activities can include: singing a song, playing a game, listening to a seasonal story, sharing a small treat, etc.. Try to make sure that each child is given the chance to pick one of the chits. Happy crafting!** End

Today we are going to sing Jingle Bells very quietly!

Child Development

Normal child development occurs in a predictable pattern, for example, children sit before they crawl and crawl before they walk. An awareness of these stages of development helps teachers to provide activities that interest and challenge (but do not frustrate) children. Often teachers are in a position to assist in recognizing developmental delays. This can lead to early identification of possible difficulties, which in turn can prevent or minimize later problems.

As Dr. Beverly Nelson explains, "Early recognition and treatment of developmental delay makes for a stronger and healthier future generation." Dr. Nelson cautions that, "One should try not to compare children, for some will accelerate on one level and be very slow at another." As teachers spend considerable time with groups of children they are able to provide valuable information to parents and healthcare professionals. This information assists professionals in making an accurate diagnosis.

ECE Connection thanks Dr. Nelson for providing the basis for the following overview of "the most important and noticeable milestones".

AGE	ACTIVITY
1 - 3 mths	Lifts head momentarily, later lifts head to 45 degrees. When pulled to a sitting position head lags. Hands are closed. Starts cooing.
3 - 4/5 mths	Lifts head to 90 degrees. Starts to roll from front to back. Looks at hands. Bears weight if held in a standing position.
4/5 - 6 mths	Supports upper body weight on forearms. Should be no head lag when pulled to a sitting position. Rolls from back to front. Sits with support. Smiles at image in mirror. Babbles.
6 - 8 mths	Can locate the direction of sounds. Bears weight on extended arms. Sits without support. Transfers a toy from one hand to another. Knows caregiver well.
8 - 10 mths	Able to pick-up things with thumb and forefinger. Starts to wave bye bye. May begin to imitate sounds.
10 - 12 mths	Will play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake and roll a ball to you. Says "mama" and "dada".
12 - 15 mths	Will place one cube on top of another (tower). Walks alone.
15 - 18 mths	Towers four cubes. Tries to use cup and spoon. Walks well. Understands one step commands.
18 - 24 mths	Runs. Goes up stairs with both feet on the same step at a time. Begins to show independence. 50 - 75 words, some two word sentences.
2 - 3 yrs	Towers 10 cubes. Climbs up steps using two feet and down using one. Dresses self. Speaks in three word sentences.
3 - 4 yrs	Climbs up/down stairs one foot at a time. Plays cooperatively with others. Speaks in four word sentences.
4 - 5 yrs	Hops on one foot. Balances on one foot. Tries to tie shoe laces. Able to understand reality. Speaks in five word sentences.

For those seeking additional information ECE Connection provides the following text: Developmental Profiles: Pre-birth through eight by Eileen Allen & Lynn Marotz. Included in this text are the following:

- basic information about expectations
- concise profiles of development that clearly outline the stages
- "developmental alerts"
- illustrations that highlight key developmental norms
- learning activities
- suggestions for developmentally appropriate activities and materials.

Those holding ECE Connection ID cards can borrow this resource book. We encourage you to make use of the our growing educational resource library. Contact ECE Connection for details. (Address and contact phone number on page 1.)

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter For Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Vol. 2 - Issue 4 / Dec. 1995

Curriculum Kit Feature

You've just got to try the **Aquaplay** centre. This water play unit provides hours of educational activity for children.

Made of sturdy plastic, the Aquaplay centre comes apart for easy transport and storage. The unit is approximately 34 x 20 x 6 inches in size. It includes a water channel (shaped somewhat like the number 8) with a raised area at one end so that water can be pumped from the lower area. The unit has three removable locks (gates) to hold the water in the elevated area, a water wheel, a wave maker, and a water pump. A small boat is also included!

And what do children learn when they use the Aquaplay unit? The following are just some developmental areas that benefit: thinking and problem solving skills, fine motor skills, language skills, social skills. The activity is also relaxing for children. So much learning... so much fun!

ECE Connection is published monthly to offer information and support to those who work with young children.

Comments, suggestions, or questions should be addressed to: ECE Connection, Box 187, St. George's, Grenada. Fax/phone messages can be left at 444-0528.

The Unseen Struggle

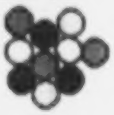
Learning Disabilities

by T. Nasus

This could be any teacher's story: *"Steven was in my KG class for about six months. He had a hard time; always getting into mischief, constantly losing his things, and speaking out of turn. The other students often made fun of him and called him "Stupidy Steven." I spoke with his mother often, usually to let her know about whatever it was that Steven had not completed or about his behaviour.*

I bumped into Steven's mother the other day. She was back here on vacation and we spoke briefly. I was surprised to hear that Steven was doing well. He had been professionally tested and had been found to have a learning disability. The special help he was now receiving was allowing him to learn. I was amazed when she told me that in fact he was found to be very bright!"

Children's bodies are growing and developing all the time. We see evidence of this in their increasing physical abilities. ("Last month she couldn't use that skipping rope properly and now look at her!") But there are some changes that are more difficult to pin-point. Take for example the mental development that allows a young child to understand that the group of ten marbles you gave her has the same number of marbles in it when the ten marbles have been placed in a row. (It may *look* as though one grouping has more, but they are the same.)



Children's minds are developing along with their bodies. For some there are extraordinary physical challenges, for example the child who is blind. Others may have disabilities of the central nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord). These impairments prevent the brain from processing information in the usual way. These processing difficulties are called LEARNING DISABILITIES (also know as LD).

Each child with a learning disability is different. S/he may have average or above average intelligence, but still have difficulty in one or more of the following areas:

* visual spatial awareness (the

See "Learning Disabilities" page 2

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Learning Disabilities (continued from page 1)

body's position in relation to space)
- motor coordination (control of muscles)
- left-right confusion
- social behaviour
- cognition (understanding)
- attention
- memory
- organization
- symbol learning (reading, writing, etc.)
- language (the skills necessary for conversation)

This is not to say that children with LD can't learn. Rather, they learn in a different way.

More often than not, people with learning disabilities struggle through life feeling like failures because those around them presume that they are unintelligent and lazy. As teachers we can assist children who learn differently by providing a variety of learning experiences. "Learning by doing," using the five senses (see, hear, touch, taste, smell) when gathering information, is a good way to start.

Children with learning disabilities benefit from having a caring and supportive environment. The following is a list of suggestions that may assist the child who has difficulty learning:

- Quiet time to help focus on his/her work.
- Consistent discipline that guides rather than punishes.
- A regular program schedule.
- Opportunity to practise new skills in as many non-academic ways as possible. For examle, preparing food, sorting toys, etc.
- Positive encouragement.
- A caring and safe environment in which to practice social skills.
- Opportinity to role play (act out) to prepare for new activities.
- Love and acceptance at home and at school.

For those interested in finding out more about learning disabilities we encourage you to make use of ECE Connection's copy of **Succeding Against the Odds** by Sally L. Smith. This book offers insight into learning disabilities and gives practical coping strategies. Those holding valid ECE Connection ID cards are welcome to borrow this resource. Contact ECE Connection for details. Our address is on page 1.

The information provided in this article was obtained from material supplied by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, North Peel Branch.

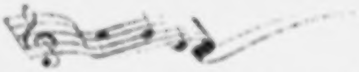
Something To Think About

According to statistics, students retain 10% of what they read, 26% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what they say, and 90% of what they do.

As teachers we must provide opportunities for children to learn by doing, using all of their senses. We must also let students talk about their understanding of the material we present.

Reference: Rief, Sandra. How To reach & teach ADD/ADHD Children. New York: Centre For Applied Research In Education, 1993.

Editor's Note



Our day to day lives keep us fully occupied and as the holidays approach additional commitments can make life quite hectic. It's easy for those who care for others to forget that we too need to take a break.

A walk along a beach, reading a good book, or a little time spent enjoying a beautiful view can help us refocus.

The job of teaching young children is demanding. At times the rewards may seem few and far between, but remember, we are important in the lives of tomorrow's adults. Taking care of ourselves helps us to be more effective with others.

Members of the ECE Connection team join me in wishing you and your families a safe and relaxing holiday season. Peace, Joy and Friendship.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Christine St. Loius of Little Lambs Pre-School, St. George's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your reply must be postmarked before the end of December '95). Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you returned a reader questionnaire (see June '95 issue) you are on our current mailing list and are eligible.

Take It! Shake It! Match it!

Learning to distinguish between different sounds is a skill that we develop. We need to have this skill in order to give meaning to what we hear. Think of different types of sounds and what they mean. The ring of the school bell, the telephone, or the church bell. Each sound tells us someting different. When we first heard these sounds they may not have held any meaning for us. Young children must learn to tell sounds apart and then give meaning to the different sounds. They need to practise these skills (1.paying attention, 2. listening, 3. matching & identifying). These skills are prerequisites to later reading.

The following sound matching activity is fun to do and allows children to practise a number of pre-reading skills:

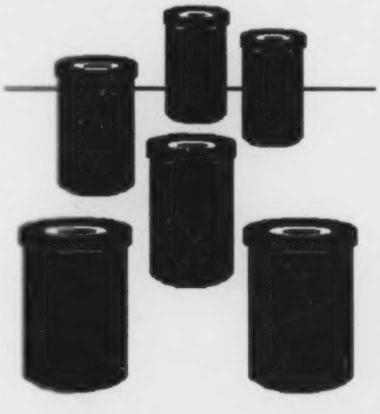
Supplies

- 12 identical empty film canisters, as shown right
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- 4 identical coins
- 1 heavy elastic band
- 1/4 cup of water
- 2 tablespoons of salt
- Scissors

Method

- Place the canisters in pairs, lids open.
- In the 1st pair place equal parts of the flour.
- Into each canister of the 2nd pair place two coins.
- Using the scissors, cut the elastic band into small pieces and place equal portions into the 3rd pair of canisters.
- Into the 4th pair place equal amounts of water.
- Into the 5th pair place equal amounts of salt.
- Leave the last pair of canisters empty.

Now replace the lids and scramble the containers. The object of this activity is to match the canisters with identical sounds.



You may want to seal the canisters with glue to prevent them being opened. You may also want to decorate the containers and make identical markings on the bottom of the matching pairs so that the children can check to see whether they were able to make a match.

Providing some empty canisters lets the children make up games of their own. For younger children you may choose to use larger containers. Identical margarine containers work just as well. Try the exercise yourself. How did you do? Remember, practise makes perfect!

Kids & Stress

Stress in children shows up in many ways. They may say that they don't feel well (tummy aches, headaches). They may get angry more easily, or seem sad or panicky. Difficulties with eating, sleeping, or other changes in normal behaviour patterns may also be signs of stress.

There are ways that we can help. Ask the child how s/he is feeling. Listen to her/him and try to help her/him work out the problem. Words of encouragement are helpful, as is helping the child to see things in a different light.

If the child is angry, upset or afraid, help her/him to settle down. Providing the opportunity to burn off some of the stressful feelings with a little physical activity can help, as can a little quiet time or a few deep breaths. Above all act calmly yourself. Children need our support and need to learn skills to help them cope.

Above information obtained from a brochure prepared by Toronto Board of Education & City of Toronto Public Health Deptment.

New Phone Number!

ECE Connection has a new contact phone & fax number. Just leave your message at:

444-0528

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) Vol 2 - Issue 5 / Jan. 1996

***__ECE Connection__* is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Reader's comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome. Write to:**

ECE Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada
Phone or fax: 444-0528.

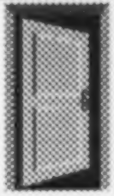
Editor's Note

Thank you to those who have written in with words of encouragement. We would also like to thank those whose contributions make it possible to produce this newsletter and distribute the kits and other resources. ECE Connection (ECEC) is definitely a team effort.

As of the end of 1995, ECEC had distributed 70 ID cards. These cards allow members to borrow curriculum kits and other resources. Additional resources are being developed and will be featured in upcoming newsletters. Nineteen ninety-six promises to be an interesting year.

On behalf of the ECEC team we wish you and yours all the best for 1996. Happy New Year!

Open The Door To A Whole New World... Read!



Learning language in its many forms (listening, speaking, reading, writing) involves a great deal more than is taught during formal lessons. Much of a child's language learning takes place during the informal give-and-take between a child and his/her environment.

By talking to children, by listen to their words and providing interesting activities that stimulate conversation, teachers (and parents) offer the opportunity for children to practice the skills necessary for effective communication.

It's interesting to note that research into children's reading shows that adult interest in and attitude toward books has a strong influence on the children in their care. Reading to children is one way that adults can help children develop an interest in and a love of books. Why is this so important? The following list (obtained in part from __Early Childhood Experiences in Language Arts__. Machado, Jeanne, 418) indicates the many ways in which reading to children helps them:

* Written language becomes familiar. They become aware of similarities and differences between what is said and what is written.
* They are exposed to the parts of a story (characters, plot, setting, etc.).
* They become familiar with the parts of a book (cover, title, illustrations, print, etc.).
* They learn how words stimulate the imagination.
* They learn how to pay attention to words, understand questions, and give answers.
* They expand their vocabulary and their knowledge about the world.
* Learning is reinforced as books can offer information to help illustrate certain ideas.
* They learn how to listen and to treat books.

See "Read!" page 3

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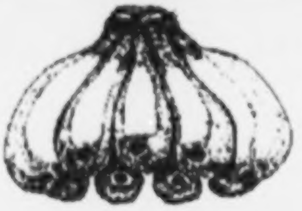


How Many Bananas?

Although the size and clarity of the illustration may make it difficult to count the bananas accurately, you probably managed to figure out that there were nine bananas. How did you do it? Did you start at one and match one banana to each successive numeral? This task may seem simple enough to us but to a young child it is quite complex.

A child who can recite the numerals 1 to 10 without a pause can still have difficulty counting actual objects. He or she might point to one banana and say "one," point another and say "two," to a third and say "three," but then say "four, five" while pointing to a fourth banana. The skill required to match one object to another or to give each object a numeral in sequence is called ***one to one correspondence***. Children learn this skill as their minds mature and as they gain experience. To help them fully understand this concept they need lots of practice with real objects: counting, matching, experimenting. Rote counting won't do it. Rote counting helps children to learn the order in which numerals are placed, but children need to count real objects to attach meaning to what they are saying.

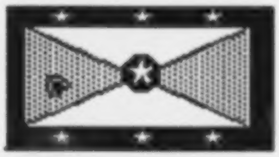
Simple activities help children develop one to one correspondence. Letting them hand out paper... one sheet for each member of the class, encouraging them to match and pair objects (crayons, shoes, buttons, etc.). The more ways we find to let them practice, the more they will want to practice. Learning maths can be fun!

Activities for February

February 7th is Independence Day. For those who wish to mark the occasions with something topical how about a flag puzzle?

Grenada,Carriacou & Petit Martinique Flag Puzzle

Supplies:



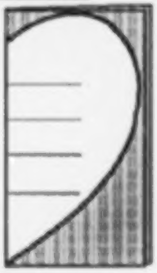
- a colour picture of the flag
- a large piece of cardboard
- a pencil
- red, yellow & green paint
- scissors

Method:

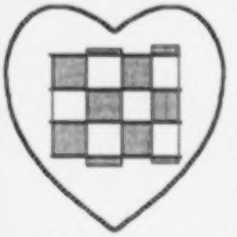
Copy the flag's design onto your cardboard. Cut out the different shapes so that your puzzle has several large (and easily recognized) pieces. Paint the pieces in the correct colours. During a small group activity show the children the picture of Grenada's flag. Discuss the shapes and the colours. Let the children help to assemble the flag puzzle.

February 14th is Valentine's Day. You may want to use this as an opportunity to talk about caring for each other. Should you wish to include a special activity in the day's program, the following craft activities may be of interest:

Woven Heart



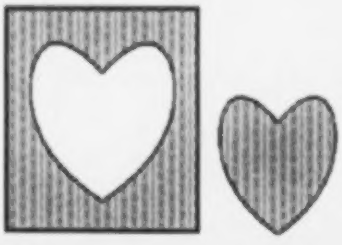
Cut an assortment of heart shapes out of red and white construction paper. This is easily done by folding a piece of paper in half and cutting out half a heart shape as shown in the diagram on the right. While the heart shape is still folded cut a few slits as indicated by the shaded lines.



Using strips of the opposite colour (red if the heart is white and white if the heart is red) have the children weave the strips in an over-and-under pattern through the slits (diagram left). Secure the strips in place with tape. (This activity requires fairly complex thinking and fine motor skills. Younger children may find the stencil activity below more enjoyable.)

Heart Stencils

For this activity you will need several postcard size pieces of stiff cardboard. Trace a heart outline into the centre of each piece and cut out the shape. (Both the heart shape and the cardboard from which it was cut are used for this activity.) Provide the children with paper and crayons and let them use the stencils to draw and shade in heart designs on their papers.



Read!

(continued from page 1)

* They learn that books are fun and that there are benefits to reading.

* The adult-child relationship is improved as enjoyable moments are shared.

Including a regular story time in your program offers a world of learning. Your local library can provide you with access to a variety of suitable books. Choose books with bright illustrations and interesting stories that the children can relate to. To assist you in this process ECE Connection now offers a growing selection children's books. We encourage you to make use of these resources. The benefits are too good to pass up!

Article written by T. Nasus. References:

Machado, Jeanne. Early Childhood Experiences in Language Arts. New York: Delmar Publishers, 1995.
Schiller, Pan & Joan Rossano. The Instant Curriculum. Maryland: Gryphon House, Inc., 1990.

Reminder

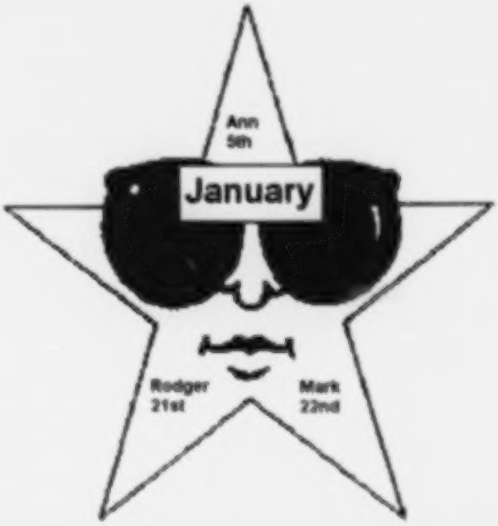
In September of '95 we featured a **growth chart**. This measuring activity was designed to introduce children to the idea of **naming** and **comparing** things. We suggested that you make a wall chart and mark on it the height of the children in your class. As a follow-up to this activity you might want to re-measure your students. Point out the changes and let the children talk about them. Use a variety of words to describe the differences: add, increase, grew, height, taller, difference... a lot of learning is going on!

Birthday Chart

Time for young children is measured in the "right now." As children get older they begin to understand about some of the ways that we measure *time*. "It's two sleeps until we go to the airport to get Uncle Mark." As there will be some talk of a New Year you may feel that the time is right to discuss the concept. Offer as many concrete examples as possible. A calendar can help.

The children in your class probably don't understand what all the hoopla of a New Year was about but you may want to use this opportunity to reinforce the fact that we can mark the passage of *time* by certain events. A wall calendar can help you to demonstrate that we can mark *time* in *months*. You may want to tell the children that the first month is called *January*. Show them the word so that they begin to make some connection between spoken and written words. A class birthday chart can help to make the concept of months more meaningful.

To make a birthday chart you might want to draw twelve stars, cakes, candles, or other simple objects and indicate a month of the year on each. Write in the name and birth date of each child whose birthday falls on that month. This can stimulate discussion: "Whose birthday comes next?" "How many more days?" There's much to be learned from a birthday chart.



Salutations!

Greetings to **Jean Noel of St. John's R.C. School, St. John's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of January '96.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. Each month the name of a teacher/school is chosen from a computer generated list. If you are on our current mailing list you are eligible. Check February's issue to see if your name appears.

E.C.E Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (ECE) Vol. 2 - Issue 6 / Feb. 1996

Spare The Rod...

by T. Nasus

This article is about corporal punishment, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "punishment inflicted upon the body, especially by beating." The intent behind this piece of writing is to raise questions and provide information.

To begin I would like to encourage those who devote their time and effort to nurturing the children in their care. Your commitment deserves praise and recognition. I also caution the few who may derive peverse pleasure from inflicting pain and suffering upon children. Such individuals may feel that it is acceptable to think up creative ways to degrade and hurt children... all in the name of discipline. Let me make it clear, this behaviour has no place in the relationship between an adult and a child and offends those who strive to nurture and protect children.

Let us imagine the following situation: In school on Monday morning David's teacher slaps him when she catches him pushing another child during assembly. Later that morning David hits one of his classmates for refusing to lend him her crayons. His teacher slaps him again for his improper conduct. David feels angry and resentful. During lunch he pushes someone again, but this time he makes sure that his teacher does not see him. What do you think David is learning about self control? Instead of teaching him to control his own behaviour and deal with his feelings in acceptable ways, his teacher's actions have caused him to focus on escaping punishment by hiding his behaviour. Do you suppose that this is what his teacher was trying to accomplish?

Imagine the situation being handled differently: David's teacher has observed that he has difficulty keeping his hands to himself. During assembly she stands close to David and tells him that she is pleased to see him standing quietly. If he pushes his classmate she quietly explains that his behaviour is not safe. She tells him that it

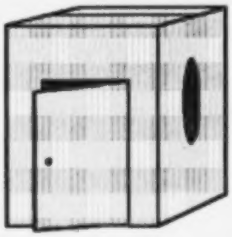
See "Spare The Rod" page 3

A Large Box

From time to time you'll come across a large empty box. It may have contained a fridge, a stove or some other sizeable item. Often it will have been put out for rubbish... thrown away by someone who doesn't realize that large boxes are treasures to those who work with young children.

Your next task will be to convince one of your friends with a truck or bus that you need him/her to drop the box to school for you. They'll think that you are a little strange, but once they see what you can do with a box, they will change their minds.

So, what does one do with a large cardboard box? First of all, a box makes a wonderful play house. Cut out a couple windows, and a door and you have a structure that will occupy children for hours. You may want to make the windows and door different shapes. This helps them to learn about different shapes. Talking about the box and what the children are doing with it adds to learning, example: "John is looking through the *round* window." Have the children decorate the box. A garden, etc. can be painted onto the outside of the box.



A large box also makes a nice puppet theatre. Cut openings in the box as shown in the ilustration on page two.

See "Large Box" page 2

PS 026905

Try Something Different!

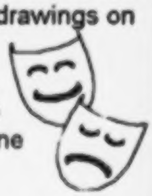
Picture this... you're sitting in front of a class of restless three year olds. They're sitting on the floor (or are supposed to be) as you read *Jack & The Bean Stalk*. You can tell that some of them are losing interest because they've begun to wriggle and whisper to each other. What do you do? Well, you could stop the story and scold those who are being disruptive. You could also move on to another activity, but how about trying something different... something completely off the wall! Stand up and act out a part of the story! Become one of the characters or change your voice in such a way that the children's attention is drawn to what you are doing or saying. You could even involve the children in the story:

"Wooooy, look at that tall bean stalk, what do you think I should do now?" (the children give an answer) "Yes, I'm going to climb right to the top... you can help me count my steps."

It sounds strange and you may feel self conscious, but when we add variety to our teaching methods it makes a difference. Children learn more when their lessons and activities are interesting.

As a child, some of my most memorable moments in class were with teachers who made learning come alive. Some used the element of surprise, some used humour. Those who took the time to search out and bring in objects and material that demonstrated what we were learning made learning meaningful. I recall one incident in which we were learning about fish. My teacher brought in a plastic bag containing half a dozen "jacks." We were encouraged to examine the fish and talk about the different parts of the fish. I can still picture us all crowded around a desk looking at the "dorsal fin." My friend was fascinated by the fish's eye... it had no eye lids! Mrs. Mackintosh even brought in a jar of live guppies (fish). I can tell you, we learned a lot more about fish than if we'd just filled in pages of a work book or looked at drawings on the black board.

I'd like to encourage others to try to look for ways to make learning come alive for their students. Teaching can be lots of fun. In the words of Gail Goldwin, "Good teaching is one fourth preparation and three fourths theatre."

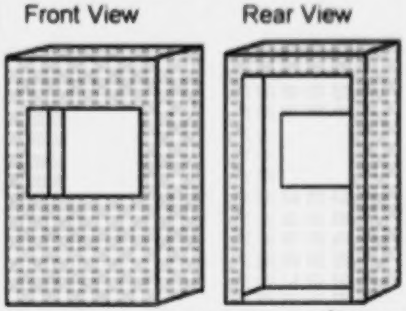


Article submitted by S.H., preschool teacher.

A Valentine Finger Rhyme

Five little Valentines jumping on the floor,
One fell down, and then there were four.
Four little Valentines flying free,
One bumped his head, and then there were three.
Three little Valentines wondering what to do,
One found a comfy chair, and then there were two.
Two little Valentines playing in the sun,
One got much too warm, and then there was one.
One little Valentine not having much fun,
She went to find her friends, and then there were none!

Large Box (cont. page 1)



(Simple puppets can be made from just about any classroom materials. See June '95 newsletter.) The children in one class I visited pretended that the theatre was a television. They put on their own skits, complete with advertisements! There were ads for *the letters of the alphabet* and for *good manners*. You will be amazed with what they can do, once you encourage them.

A box can also be *a shop*, *a post office*, *a bank*... try providing a box for outdoor play. With a little imagination a box becomes *a car*, *a boat*, all sorts of things. Best of all, it's a resource that costs nothing. End

Salutations!

Greetings to **Stephanie Bascombe of Mt. Granby Pre-Primary, St. John's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of February '96.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list you are eligible. Check next month's issue to see if your name appears.

Daily Exercise

According to research children perform better academically and have a more positive attitude to learning when they are involved in regular physical activity. Studies also show that children who engage in daily fitness:

- have better health
- are less affected by stress
- are more independent
- play better with others
- are less aggressive
- have improved self-esteem
- have increased confidence
- suffer less from depression

(Fitness Canada)

The benefits of including some form of physical activity in a school program are numerous. The following ideas may help you to help your students get active:

- pretend to be different animals
- go for a nature walk
- organize an obstacle course
- play follow-the-leader
- put on some music (or bang on a tin can) and have a "jump-up"
- sing an active song and have the children "act-out" the words
- borrow ECE Connection's *parachute* and do some of the suggested activities.

Think up your own activities and remember that when you get involved with what the children are doing you model what you want them to do.

Encourage everyone's efforts. The goal is for everyone to be active. Have fun!

Spare The Rod (Continued from page 1)

is her job to make sure that all the children in her class are treated well and that he will have to sit by himself if he hurts others. Later when he hits his classmate he is told that his behaviour has hurt her and that he will have to work on his own. His teacher explains that when he is angry he needs to use his words to express his feelings. He is quietly removed for a short period of time. When he re-joins the group he is welcomed back and praised when he behaves well. The difference? In the second example David's teacher models the type of behaviour she wants to see and keeps the focus on the behaviour not on the child.

Good behaviour involves more than merely following rules. It involves *making choices, being cooperative*, and *being able to understand and respond to the needs and feelings of others.* These skills involve conscious decisions made by the child... *self discipline.* This form of internal control is learned when exchanges between the child and those around him demonstrate that he is accepted and understood.

We know that children learn far more from their life experiences than they do from "being told." We also know that they must have lots of practice at the skills we want them to learn. When we depend on physical punishment as our means of guiding children we control them by fear. "*I must keep my hands to myself... it upsets my friends when I slap them.*" becomes "*I have to keep my hands to myself because I will get a slap if I don't.*" (Internal versus external control.) In the latter, when the threat of punishment is removed the unacceptable behaviour usually returns.

Teaching children how to become masters of their own emotions requires patience, dedication, and an understanding of how children learn. Adults must model the behaviours they want to see in children. Imagine if we asked the children in our classes to use the toilet, then we urinated behind the tree in the yard! It just would not make sense.

In closing, I leave you with a thought offered by Dr. Ross Campbell. Often we look to the scriptures and other words of wisdom to guide us in teaching children. If indeed the rod, referred to in bible passages and in the phrase "Spare the rod and spoil the child," was used for beating, how do we explain "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23)? Is it not that the rod is used to gently guide, to prevent the flock from coming to any harm, and to offer support?

References: Campbell, Ross M.D.. How To Really Love Your Child. New York: Signet Books, 1982. / Leach, Penelope Ph.d.. Children First. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

***ECE Connection* is published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Reader's comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome. Write to:**
ECE Connection, P.O. Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.
Phone or fax: 444-0528.

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (ECE) Vol. 2 - Issue 7 / Mar. & Apr. 1996

Parents As Partners

After a stressful phone conversation with an irate parent, a highly qualified and respected teacher was heard to remark, *"It's not the children I have problems with, it's their parents!"* This statement may describe the sentiments of a number of adults who work with young children. The relationship between parent and teacher may be far from the ideal. Both parties may feel criticized and "un-heard". Each side can hang onto their point of view... the "right way", and battle lines are drawn.

Research into the relationship between parents and teachers tells us that disruptions between people working together are rarely caused by one side only. They are generally the result of a number of small events that grow into a larger issue. The same research also tells us that blame is not helpful. What is needed is to change the way people behave toward one another. As a rule, if one side changes the other does too; and this is where we come in. As teachers we can take that first step.

Parent involvent in most any form improves student achievemement.

You are probably wondering why you should have to bother at all. After all, *"It's always some complaint or the other from Claudia's mother, and Jonathan's father never listens to what I tell him about his child."* But there is one compelling reason for us to encourage and include parents. "Parent involvement in most any form improves student achievement." (Morrison, 421). The fact that children benefit from a good relationship between home and school is what encourages us to make the effort.

What is the best way to develop a positive relationship? To begin, it is important to develop **regular communication between home and school**. Make every effort to let parents know what is going on in your classroom. Do not presume that they get this information from their children or that they are not interested. They are far more likely to support your efforts if they understand your goals and methods. Keeping parents up-to-date can be done through a school notice board. (See Oct. '94 issue for notice board ideas.). Post useful information and topics of interest, and develop the habit of changing material regularly. **Newsletters**

See "Parents" page 2

ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. We welcome comments, questions or suggestions. Write:

ECE Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada
Phone/Fax: 444-0528

Editor's Note

As Easter vacation begins at the end of March and continues well into April, we have chosen to combine the March and April newsletter. Our regular monthly mailings will resume in May.

We encourage readers to contribute to this newsletter and to let others know about ECE Connection. Our goal is to offer support and information to all who work with young children. We can only do so with your help. Recent statistics indicate that a number of establishments (related to ECE) are unaware of this service. Please share with others and encourage them to include their names on our mailing list. Our service is free and offers a number of resources designed to inform and support those working with young children.

This issue: new kits, activities, classroom guests.

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Parents (Cont. from page 1)

also keep parents informed. They need not be fancy, just a half page letting parents know what their children are doing in class and what is coming up. If making copies of a newsletter is a problem, make up one large copy and post it in a location where parents can see it. Another way of keeping parents informed is to schedule occasions when they are invited to **visit their child's class.** Just before daily dismissal is often a good time. Display something each child has done and let the children give their parents or guardians a tour of the class.

Parents sometimes feel that the only time they are contacted is when their child is causing problems or when the school wants something from them. Surprise them by contacting them with "good news!" *"Mrs. Barker I just wanted to let you know that Evan spent a long time working quietly at the puzzle table today."* If Mrs. Barker was used to hearing about Evan being disruptive she would be thrilled by that positive comment.

It is important to remember that when we approach parents our body language and attitude send a message. Avoid being critical, parents respond far better if we offer support and encouragement. Listen to what they have to say and try to reserve judgment. We may not agree with their methods and ideas, but parents will be more receptive if we are sensitive to their needs.

When parents feel understood they are more likely to be supportive of our programs. A good partnership between parent and school is one in which parents and teachers can work and learn together. Good communication is the first step in building healthy home and school relations.

Written by T. Nasus. Ref.: Morrison, George S.. Early Childhood Education Today. New York: Macmilan Publishing Company, 1991.

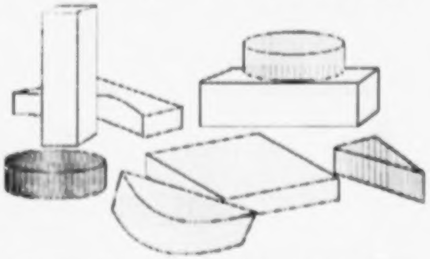
BLOCKS

Children's building blocks come in a wide variety of sizes and materials. You are probably familiar with some of the commercially made blocks. Lego and Duplo, Mega Blox (available on loan from ECE Connection) and wooden play blocks are among these. As you are no doubt aware, store bought blocks are costly. Tight budgets seldom allow for a decent set to be a part of a classroom; but blocks are a wonderful educational resource. For young children (and even for older children) they offer the opportunity to practice so many of the skills that we want children to learn. Among other things, blocks reinforce maths skills. As children use blocks they experience: *grouping, patterning, one-to-one correspondence, ordering, measurement, addition, subtraction and fractions.* Using blocks blocks gives "hands-on" practice with these concepts, and as we know this is a vital part of later more abstract maths learning.

With a little effort and imagination you can assemble a set of blocks for your classroom. Cardboard boxes make safe blocks and come in a wide range of sizes. Ask parents and friends to save sturdy boxes and provide a corner of your room for block play. You may even wish to paint the boxes. Left-over house paint can be used. Just make sure that it is lead-free paint.

Sponges also make good blocks. Should you come across a special deal on sponges, purchase a dozen and you have a set of light-weight blocks. Be sure to supervise younger children with sponges... they tend to bite off tiny bits of the sponges.

Should you know of anyone who works with wood, ask for a box of scraps. With a little sandpaper the wood pieces can be made into an excellent set of blocks. Let the children help with the sanding. It provides an interesting opportunity for fine motor skills practice!



Salutations!

Greetings to **Ann-Marie Joseph** of **La Poterie Pre-School, St. Andrew's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of March '96.) Should we hear from you by this date, a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

Remember, you must be on our current mailing list to be eligible for our monthly draw. Names are picked from a computer generated list, so everyone has an equal chance. Check next month to see if your name appears.

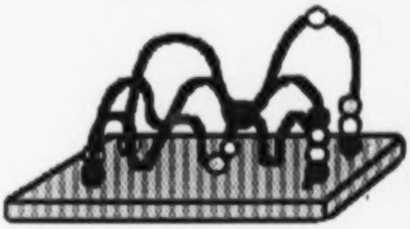
Curriculum Kits

In late April the following kits will be added to those already available through ECE Connection (ECEC):

Special Animals
Our Beaches & Seas
The Food We Eat

New single item resources include children's and teachers' books (a book list is available from ECEC) and the following:

Mini Magnetic Puppet Theatre
(a table-top activity)
Memory Game
(featuring children around the world)
Bead Mazes (2)
(illustrated below)



ECEC's original selection of kits includes:

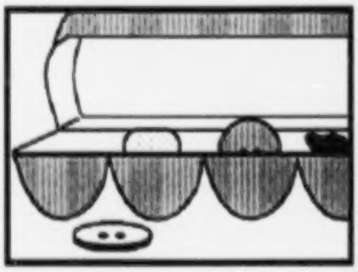
The Alphabet
Numbers
Colours & Shapes
My Body... All About Me
Domestic Animals
Fine Motor Skills (4)
Gross Motor Parachute
Aquaplay Centre
Mega Blox Building Blocks

These items are available on loan (free of charge) and are designed to enhance your educational program. Those holding ECEC ID cards can borrow material for two weeks at a time. For further details contact ECEC at 444-0528.

Egg Box Activities

Ask parents and friends to save egg boxes for you. Once you have collected one or two you will have the main ingredient for a number of simple, educational activities. Try these games:

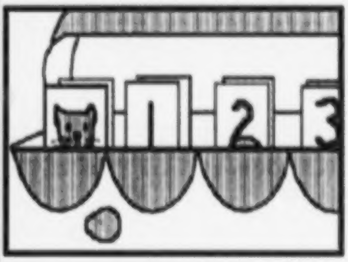
Match Up



An egg box makes a great sorting tray. Provide a number of small objects for children to sort. Buttons, fabric scraps, pieces of ribbon, seeds, small pictures, etc. can be sorted into the separate sections of an egg box. You may want to glue an example of each different item into the bottom of individual egg cups for younger children.

Sorting or classification skills are necessary for later reading, writing and maths learning. When children sort they gain experience in grouping items by similar properties.

Egg Box Toss



Using bits of cardboard, number the egg cups from one to ten, leaving one cup at either end blank. Draw a dog for one blank cup and a cat for the other. To play the game children take turns tossing pebbles (or similar items) into the egg box. If a pebble goes into the dog section the player barks. If it goes into the cat section the player meows. If the pebble lands on a numeral the player names that numeral.

Reference: The Instant Curriculum by Pam Schiller & Joan Rossano. Published by Gryphon House Inc., Mt. Rainer, Maryland, 1990.

Transform Everyday Items Into Classroom Resources

A variety of useful items and activities can be made out of household material. The following items are needed to construct classroom resources: sturdy cardboard boxes and cylinders in assorted sizes, egg boxes, assorted plastic bottles and containers with and without lids, assorted tin cans, old magazines, fabric scraps, wire coat hangers.
Collect and save these items. Details later!

Earth Day

Mon., April 22nd

Earth Day is an international day, set aside to heighten awareness of the importance of the care and protection of our world. Teachers may want to discuss Earth Day with their students. Encourage them to help to look after their environment. Ask for their suggestions and make a list of their ideas. Perhaps the class can become involved in one of the suggested activities?

It would be useful to get students' ideas ahead of Earth Day, this way you can prepare for one of the suggested activities. Should you prefer to make up an activity yourself perhaps the children can do the following:

A School Yard Clean-Up

You'll need a container for rubbish and gloves so that those collecting litter are protected. Have some of the children tend plants. They can weed and water the plants and/or plant new plants to beautify the yard. (Stress the importance of washing hands after these activities.) Discuss with your class what happens when they damage plants. Breaking young branches, peeling off bark and stripping off leaves harms or even kills plants. Plants help us. How? Food, housing, shade, holding the soil in place with their roots... try to think up some of the many ways we use and need plants. Perhaps the children can make posters to show how important plants are to us. Encourage everyone's ideas and efforts. Write and tell us all about it!

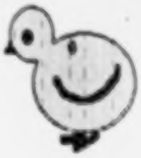
Craft Clay

ECE Connection thanks K. Brathwaite for this great idea.

The following recipe makes a wonderful dough that can be used to make all sorts of ornaments. You might want to include it in your Easter craft activities.

Supplies

1 box baking soda (1 lb box), (abt. $3.20)
1 box cornstarch (3 1/2 cups), abt. $4.00)
acrylic paint, (abt. $4.95 per tube)
1 1/4 cups water
paint brushes
cooking utensils



Method

Mix baking soda, corn starch and water in a saucepan and cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook until mixture is the consistency of mashed potatoes (do not overcook). Place mixture on a plate and cover with a damp cloth until cool enough to touch. Shape dough as desired and place on a wire rack to dry overnight. (Drying can also be done in a low oven for 10 to 15 minutes.) Once dry the ornaments can be painted.

Should you want to hang your ornaments, it would be helpful to make a little hole in each item before the dough dries. You may also wish to seal painted ornaments with clear nail polish.

Invite A Guest Into Your Classroom...

For a limited time ECE Connection is providing the opportunity for teachers to have a visitor come into their classroom to interact with students in a short educational activity. A choice of stories, games, art and/or crafts will be featured.

This service is offered free of charge and is available May 8th and 9th. Those interested in this offer are encouraged to contact ECE Connection as soon as possible. A limited number of spaces are available on a "while time and space permits" basis. For further details call 444-0528 or write to ECE Connection: Box 187, St. George's, Grenada.

E.C.E. Connection

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education (ECE) Vol. 2 - Issue 8 / May 1996

Workbooks & Seat Work

Appropriate Teaching Practice for the Early Years?

Compiled by T. Nasus

Among the comments and suggestions we receive at ECE Connection one or two topics stand out. Concern about the use of workbooks and long periods of seat work is among these. This article takes a look at this subject. Is it reasonable to require young children to fill in work sheets and spend long periods of time sitting at tables or desks? The answer quite simply is *no*. Even for children five years and older this is not appropriate teaching practice.

Children are active learners and as LaBritta Gilbert says, "To maximize learning, we must maximize participation." (Do Touch. 9) Karen Miller, in her book Ages & Stages, outlines seven objections to worksheets as a means of instruction for children under the kindergarten level. These have been listed below (modified):

1. Written symbols (letters, numbers, shapes) represent real things. Young children do not yet truly understand these abstract concepts.
2. Children learn using all their senses (see, hear, touch, taste, smell). Workbooks merely provide "drill." for what has already been learned.
3. Young children have not yet properly developed the fine muscle (finger) control that is necessary to colour within lines, etc..
4. Young children have short attention spans and find it difficult to sit still for more than a few minutes at a time. (Behaviour problems may be the result of boredom or frustration.)
5. Once the thrill of "playing school" wears off, workbooks become a real chore.
6. Children's creativity should be nurtured. When they are given patterns to copy and colour they are less likely to come up with their own ways of drawing things.
7. Often teachers use worksheets to keep children busy. There are more worthwhile and educational things that children can be doing with their time. (131)

Instead of workbooks and seat work try providing lots of 'hands on.' Sorting activities are wonderfully engaging ways to give children the chance to learn and practice. Shells, buttons, seeds... there are so many things that can be used. Let children hunt for and cut or tear a specific letter out of old newspapers and magazines. Let children circle letters and numbers in the same way. Make up games and puzzles, have children point out shapes in their environment. With a bit of imagination your classroom will become a place of active learning. Make learning an enjoyable experience.

You are encouraged to borrow ECE Connection's copy of Do Touch and Ages & Stages, both excellent resources for active learning. References: Gilbert, LaBritta. Do Touch. Maryland: Gryphon House, 1989. / Miller, Karen. Ages & Stages. Telshare Publishing. 1985.

GEOBOARD

Educational, easy-to-make, economical, entertaining, enduring! Looking for a classroom resource that fits this description... how about a GEOBOARD? Made of finishing nails, a piece of wood and an assortment of rubber bands, a geoboard is a simple piece of equipment that has many uses. For starters, children will enjoy stretching the rubber bands over the nails to make designs. Think of all the fine motor practice that goes on as they engage in this activity. A geoboard also reinforces shapes and their com-

See "Geoboard" page 3

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A Display Idea

The following decorations were observed during a recent visit to St. John's Anglican Pre-Primary Department. ECE Connection would like to thank members of staff for their warm welcome and for allowing us to share their ideas.

Supplies: Bristol board, pencil, scissors, paint, glue, thin pieces of Styrofoam or sponge, string, clear varnish.

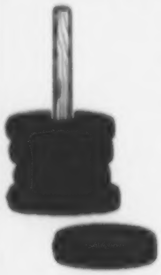
Method: Draw and cut-out a front and back of the desired decoration. Cut a piece of Styrofoam in roughly the same shape. The Styrofoam is "sandwiched" in between the two pieces of Bristol board and glued in place. (See illustration above.) This makes the item sturdy yet very light. It also gives the object a two-dimensional appearance. Paint, then varnish the finished product. (The varnish makes the paint look much brighter.) Suspend the decoration from your ceiling.

Several decorations can be attached one below the other or suspended on a coat hanger to make a mobile. Use these decorations to provide visual reinforcement for things that you are covering in class. This helps make learning more interesting and meaningful to your pupils. Don't be afraid to try new and different ideas of your own. That's how we learn!

Kids Never Tire
of an
Old Car Tire

Tractor Tire Sand Pit

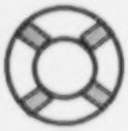
Old car tires make excellent resources for children's outdoor play. A pile of old tires can stimulate the imagination and offers the opportunity for hours of vigorous physical activity. But physical activity is just part of it. Just think of the "mental exercise" that goes into lifting and moving a tire.



"This is very heavy, but when Marcia helps me we can lift it."
"One, two, three tires on top of each other. Look, we've made a long hole to hide in!"
"Woooy! Look at how it wobbles when it rolls."
"When it rolls down that flat piece of ground it stops, but over here on the slope it keeps going longer."

Tires piled around a thick wooden stake that has been partially buried in the ground (see illustration on left) make an interesting climbing apparatus. It's also a great way to store a few tires. It tends to keep things from looking too untidy.

If you are fortunate enough to get hold of four wheels, a tire can be transformed into a wonderful "coaster." You'll need to get a matching set of wheels, the kind that can be screwed into the tire as indicated in the four shaded blocks in the outline on the left. You'll also need to locate four blocks of wood that fit snugly inside the tire and serve as a mount for the wheels. Attach the blocks of wood with screws. This makes the coaster's wheel attachment more sturdy. Once you've constructed the toy allow the children to use it on a flat surface where the wheels can move freely. A lot of problem solving and creative play will happen.



Salutations!

Greetings to **Desline Thomas** of **Dunfermline Daycare Centre/ Preschool, St. Andrew's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of May '96.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible to be chosen. Names are picked at random, so everyone has an equal chance. Check the June '96 edition of our newsletter to see if your name appears.

May 12th is Mother's Day

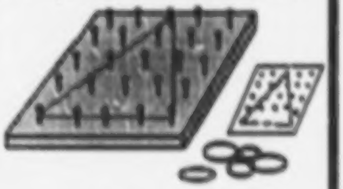
The ideal Mother's Day! Sleep is the one thing that most mothers are short on.

Those who include activities relating to Mother's Day in their program may find it helpful to focus on "mothering" rather than mothers. Not every child has a mother to give a card or craft to, but someone cares and nurtures each child and this person can be recognized as important in the child's life. If we focus on family we include fathers, grandparents and all those who are special to the child. Perhaps children can cut out stars (shown below) and then decorate them. How about adding the following words: ***You are my star!***

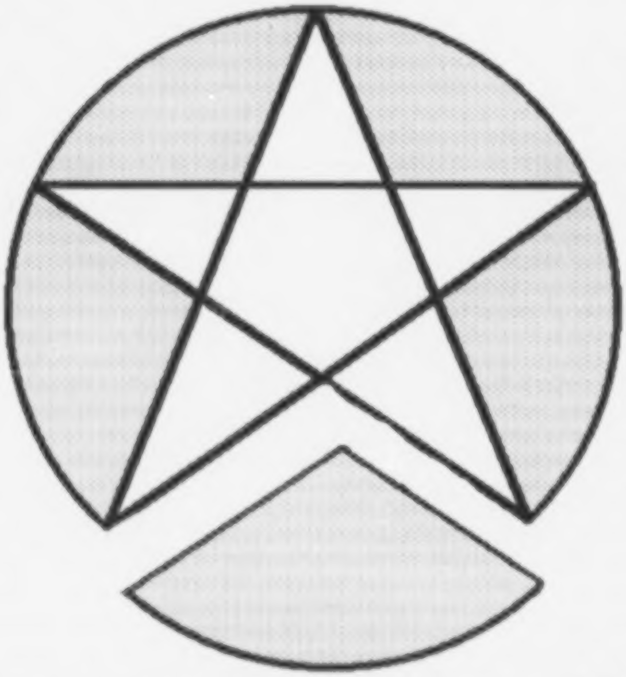
Geoboard

Cont. from page 1

ponent parts. (For example, children come to understand that a triangle has three sides when they stretch one rubber band across three different nails or use three rubber bands to make the separate sides of the shape.) By providing sketches of shapes for the children to copy you will be enhancing visual awareness and object recognition... children must figure out how to duplicate the shape shown on the card. This skill is a prerequisite to later writing skills. This activity can also be extended to help children with letter and numeral recognition. Be sure to give the children time to figure things out for themselves. Learning is a process of discovery.



I'm Cutting All By Myself!



Cut out circles and outline the star shape as illustrated above. Young children need only make a few simple cuts to cut out a star!

Scissors hold a certain fascination for pre-schoolers. Under supervised conditions a pair of safety scissors can be an entertaining and educational item.

ECE Connection's Fine Motor Skills kits (4) offer a selection of scissors designed for children with a range of abilities. The following is a list of contents: *10 pairs of easy grip scissors (these need only a squeezing motion for cutting but are for use with construction paper only), 10 pairs of round-end scissors, 2 pairs of lefty scissors (for children who displays a strong preference for using their left hand), 3 pairs of serrated-edge scissors.* In addition, the kit contains: *4 hole punches, 36 plastic needles and a booklet of activities.*

We encourage those holding valid ECE Connection ID cards to make use of the Fine Motor Skills Kits. You may want to use the scissors to have children create the star shape illustrated on the left. Provide pre-cut circles with lines drawn as shown above. The children need only make straight cuts along the outline of the star to remove the triangular pieces and create a star. Use the stars to decorate your classroom. This recognizes the children's efforts and stimulates discussion. Be encouraging and positive in your comments. "You all worked hard to make these beautiful stars."

E.C.E. Connection

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ECE Connection's Fax/Phone No.

444-0528

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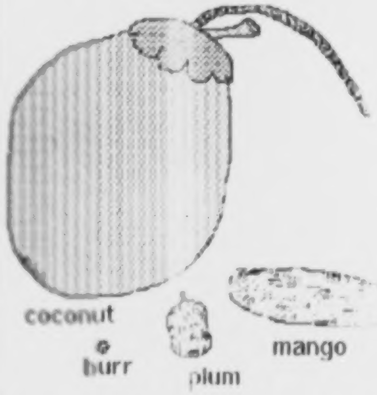
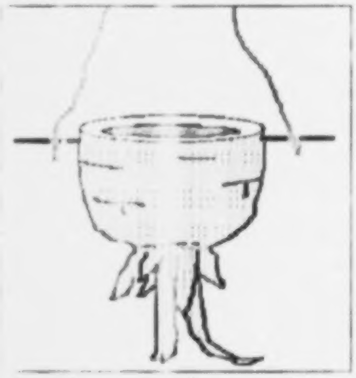
About Plants

As the Rainy Season is under way and the theme of Plants & Trees is fresh on everyone's mind you may want to start a seed collection. Let your students know that you are looking for many different kinds of seeds. Set aside a little time each day to discuss the seeds that have been brought it. You might want to start things off by making a sign and setting up space where the seeds that have been collected can be displayed. Bring in one or two different seeds, for example a coconut, a plum seed, a mango seed, a burr. Talk with your students about the seeds. How are they the same and how are they different? Group them, count them, compare size, shape, weight. Discuss how each seed might travel from the parent plant to a new location? (Wind, water, animals/people, some even "explode.")





Another simple growing activity requires only a carrot top, a knife, match sticks and string. To make this miniature hanging basket, cut the top off the carrot, leaving about 1 1/2 inches of carrot with the top. Clip off any leaves but leave a little bit of the stem. Hollow out a portion of the middle of the carrot, and using the match sticks (as shown above) attach the string and suspend the carrot top upside down. Keep water in the hollowed out section and watch what happens. New shoots grow up!

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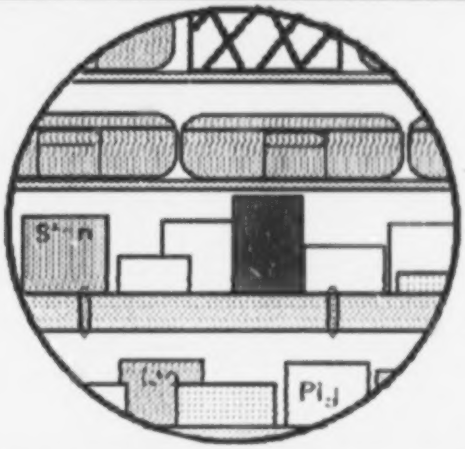
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TAKE A PEEK INSIDE



See what's on the shelves! *ECE Connection*, in cooperation with the Early Childhood Department, Ministry of Education, has extended its selection of teacher resources. Three new kits *(The Food We Eat, Our Beaches & Seas, Special Animals)* are available. In addition, a number of single item activities, teacher resource books and children's books are available for those holding valid *ECE Connection* ID cards.

Teachers are encouraged to make use of these resources. A list of what is available can be obtained from the Ministry. This will allow you to have a ready reference of the items carried by ECE Connection. Please contact your Ministry Supervisor for more information and/or to inquire as to which kits and resources are "in." The Ministry phone number is 440-3161.

Editor's Note

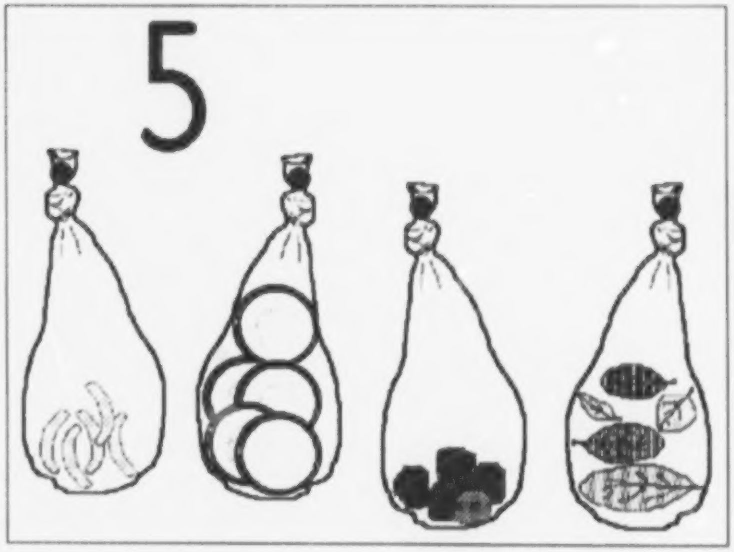
My recent visit to Grenada proved to be a most valuable and worthwhile learning experience. It was so good to have the opportunity to meet with teachers and to receive feedback as to how we can make newsletters, kits and other resources more useful.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education, Early Childhood Department for their encouragement and support. Thanks to Mrs. Ivy Harris and her staff I was able to visit a number of schools and meet with teachers and children from around Grenada. My apologies to those I was not able to visit, especially our members in Carriacou and Petit Martinique, you were in my thoughts but time was not on my side.

Regards to all, keep in touch.

Help To Reinforce Maths Concepts

Here's an idea that will involve your students. *ECE Connection* recently visited Green Street Pre-School (St. George's) and was delighted to see a display of small transparent plastic bags attached to the wall at the children's eye level. Each bag contained a set of small items. These had been collected and brought in by the children who were exploring a particular numeral/number. Let's say the number was "5"... each child had collected five things. If memory serves correctly there were five small stones, five pieces of macaroni, five bottle tops, five leaves. What an interesting way to reinforce "fiveness." Each child could be actively involved. Great idea!



Do You Like Maths?

Does the word maths strike a sour note with you? It certainly is not a popular subject for many adults, but why? Experts point to a lack of true understanding... lots of rote learning with little comprehension. Our first experiences with maths have an important influence on our later learning. To begin with, maths concepts must be learned when a child is developmentally ready. The child must have the language and the background experience to make learning meaningful. Maths concepts must also be acquired in the correct order.

The way in which a child is taught maths is directly related to that child's attitude toward the subject. Punishment for failure is not helpful, in fact it is quite damaging. Children must be given the opportunity to have lots of hands-on, practical experience. "The more the merrier" is a good rule of thumb, but not more drilling and rote learning. More time to explore and experiment.

Maths is not confined to a subject heading to be taught only during a specific lesson. It is in fact a part of everyday life. When children count, match, sort, classify, order... solve problems, they are doing maths. They must be given the opportunity to experience maths and to try out their ideas. Their experiences must be seen to have a purpose, for example, *"We need to count how many children are in class to see if we have enough paper for each child to have one sheet."* This is how the learning takes place.

Give the children in your care lots of opportuniy to experience maths. Look for ways to make it a part of all that you do. Children learn best when they are interested and involved.

The basis for this article was taken from a discussion facilitated by [illegible] Whiting [illegible]) and from the draft [illegible] of *[illegible] Science: A [illegible] Helping [illegible] Planning [illegible] Early Childhood Programmes* written by [illegible] W[illegible] VSO, Grenada) [illegible] excellent re- [illegible] practi- [illegible] enhance [illegible] Look out [illegible] this [illegible].

Salutations!

Greetings to Rita **Comissiong of Westmorland Junior School, St. George's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of June '96.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

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Food For Thought

A gentle touch can say so much. The child who we want to touch the least probably needs it the most.

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E.C.E. Connection

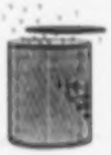
A Newsletter for Early Childhood Education *Volume 2 - Issue 10 / July 1996*

ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Readers' comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome. Write to:

ECE Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada

Fax/Phone:
444-0528

In This Issue...



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PS 026905

School's Out!

Relief, sadness, satisfaction... a mixture of emotions. If you are feeling additional stress as the end of the school year approaches you are not alone. It is quite normal for teachers and caregivers to experience added tension at this time. Change often causes these feelings, not only for adults but for children as well. Being aware of this is the first step in helping teachers and caregivers to cope more effectively. The following is a list of some things that you can do to help everyone deal with the added tension:

* Openly discuss how each member of the class is feeling about the end of the year. Listen to each child's comments without being judgmental. Often just letting each child know that they have been heard can help.

* Children handle change better when they are given information ahead of time. Let them know what to expect and what is expected of them. (For children who will be graduating into another class, a visit to their new classroom helps to prepare them for the experience.)

* Include additional physical activity to help children "burn off steam".

* Plan something special to mark the end of the year. (Bake a cake, have a party, go on an outing.)

Once school is over what are your plans? Perhaps you are considering a holiday program? By offering child care during the holidays you help parents and provide yourself with a source of income. To run an effective holiday program you will need to give some thought to how you can occupy children. Your program should allow children to have "fun" safely. (See ECE Connection's July '95 newsletter for suggestions for "Planning a Summer Program.")

Teachers may find it helpful to use the holiday period to collect material and ideas for the upcoming school year. Ask yourself, "What worked this past year?" "What needs improvement?" "What can I do to be more effective?" Discuss your thoughts with others. Often these periods of reflection and discussion provide ways to grow and improve. After all, we are learners too!

Written by T. Nasus

Editor's Note

This newsletter marks the end of our second year of publication. A small group of dedicated people make ***ECE Connection*** work and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to those whose contributions (in the form of ideas, time, material and funding) make all of this possible.

On a more personal note, I would like to bid a fond farewell to Miss. Anne Watkins. Over the past two years Miss. Watkins has been a strong supporter and promoter of ***ECE Connection.*** Her enthusiasm and dedication have been most appreciated and she will be greatly missed by the ***ECE Connection*** team. Our thanks and best wishes for continued success.

The following letter was written by Miss. Watkins for publication in this newsletter:

Goodbye from Miss. Watkins

It is with great sadness that I come to say goodbye to you all. I want to thank ECE Connection members and indeed all Early Childhood Administrators, teachers and nursery workers that I have had the pleasure to have contact with.

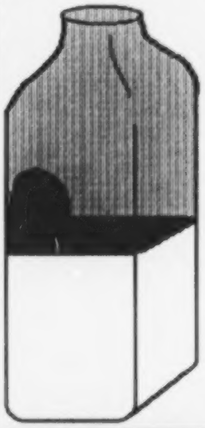
I leave Grenada on the 29th of August for four months with family and friends in the UK before returning to Australia in January 1997.

I have enjoyed my time here so much, our sharing and learning has, I feel, been a beneficial two way process. I know we will all continue to work for the cause of Early Childhood wherever we are.

Anne Watkins

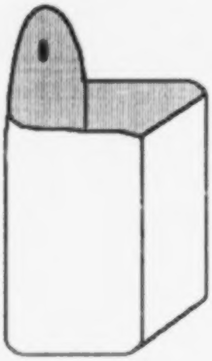
Make Handy Classroom Containers

Don't throw away those empty plastic bottles! Ketchup, salad dressing, vinegar and other "rectangular" based containers make light-weight, sturdy receptacles for your classroom. They can be attached to walls, doors and the sides of desks and tables. Depending on the size of the bottle, the container can be used to hold pencils, crayons, scissors, exercise books... they can even hold a small plant or a bunch of flowers.



To make this useful resource just cut away the excess plastic, indicated by the shaded portion on the sketch to the left.

Begin by marking the bottle with ball-point pen to establish the cutting line. Remember to leave one side taller than the rest. This "lip" will be used to attach the container to the wall or other vertical surface.



Use a sharp knife or the pointed end of a pair of scissors to make the first cut. Once this is done use sturdy scissors to cut along your line. Secure the finished product to a flat surface using a drawing pin or nail. Hammer the nail through the plastic "lip," as indicated by the small black circle in the sketch above. A row of containers make mini cubbies!

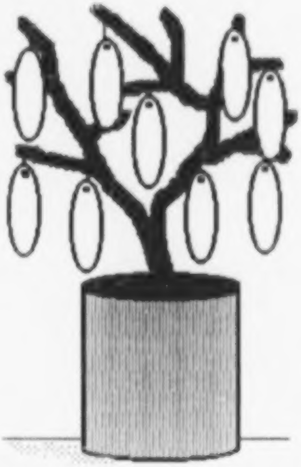
Salutations!

Greetings to **Jacinta Stiell** of **L'Esterre Pre-primary School, Carriacou**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of July 1996.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible to be chosen. Names are picked at random from a computer generated list so everyone has a chance.

A Decorating Idea from La Poterie Pre-school

Often the most creative ideas for classroom decoration can be found in the rooms of those who work with young children. During a recent visit to La Poterie Pre-school a member of ECE Connection's editorial team was delighted to find a "name tree". (Sketch below.)



To make this students' name display you will need a large tin can, stones, a dead tree branch or bush, scissors, some stiff coloured paper, a pencil and string. Stand the branch in the can and hold it in place using the stones. Outline and cut-out large paper leaves (or fruit) and write the names of the children in your class on the leaves. Tie the leaves to the branches of your "tree."

What's Ahead For September?

Just as teachers will already be thinking about the next school year, ***ECE Connection*** is busy making plans for the 1996/97 season. The feedback we receive from you, our readers, helps us to be more effective. Thanks to those who have taken the time to write and let us know what works and what doesn't.

Starting in September there will be additional teacher resource books available at the Ministry. A description of the new titles will be provided in the September newsletter.

Much of the feedback we have received centres around the need for inexpensive materials that can be used to create educational resources. We are working to make a selection of items available. Thanks to Ministry support we are hoping that teachers will have access to some supplies as early as mid-September. More details will be given as they become available.

The next issue of ***ECE Connection*** will contain ideas for classroom set-up and decoration. This publication will be in the mail by the last week of August. Look out for your copy!

We encourage those who will be away from their classrooms during the holidays to try to make arrangements to gain access to their rooms ahead of the first day of class. This gives you time to set-up, well in advance of the arrival of your students. Being organized and prepared helps to ease some of the stress of the first few days. Furniture arrangement and classroom decoration is certainly a lot easier when your room is empty. An attractive and inviting classroom does a lot to lift everyone's spirits.

Children's Carnival Frolic

Children and adults won't want to miss the Children's Carnival Frolic. This exciting event is to be held on

August 3rd

For further details you are asked to get in touch with

Ms. Joan St. Bernard

444-1403

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 1 *September 1996*

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Getting Ready

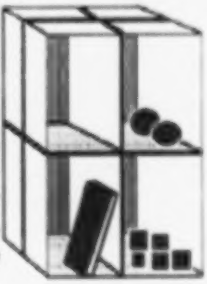
The size of your classroom and the number of children in your care will affect your program and room arrangement. Setting up your room well in advance of the arrival of your students gives you the time to use your creativity to make the most of the resources you have. Try to gain access to your room a day or two before the opening of school. The following are a few suggestions to help you prepare.

Try to provide:

* *An arrival and welcome area.* Make this close to the entrance to your room. A table or low shelf and wall hooks can be located in this area for lunch boxes, rain coats, etc.. If obtaining or mounting hooks is a problem, string a piece of clothes line (shown below) along the wall and use pegs to hang the items.

* *Table top or desk space.* Each child should have seating space. You may find that by pushing several desks together you have a larger table surface and more floor space making your room look less cluttered. Make sure that every seat has a clear view of the things that students will be expected to attend to.

* *Storage space.* If everything in your room has a special place where it is kept it makes it easier to keep things tidy. If shelf space is limited use sturdy cardboard boxes or crates for storage. These can be stacked and secured to make a "home" for your resources. In addition, wood planks can be placed on concrete blocks or sturdy boxes to make low shelves.



A cardboard barrel (shown pg. 3) with a lid can be cut down and used as a storage area and/or a table. Large plastic pails also make sturdy toy containers and are easy to move about. Keep different items separate and label each storage space with a word and/or an outline (example left) of what belongs in each space. Labeling lets users know where things belong and helps children to recognize symbols and words.

Plastic containers (cut as shown right) make effective storage pockets. (See July '96 newsletter for details.) A number of these can be attached to a wall or door and used for small item storage or display.

(Continued on page 3)

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Very Different Experiences

The first day of school can leave a lasting impression in the mind of a young child.

Venetia's first day of school had been so full of new experiences that she could hardly get to sleep that night. She recalled how Miss. Smith had greeted her at the classroom door, stooping down to shake her hand and saying, "Good morning Venetia, my name is Miss. Smith. It's good to have you in my class." It certainly was nice of Miss. Smith to introduce her to Sandra (a new friend) and let her know that she could play with the building blocks or look at a picture book until the bell rang for assembly. When Venetia had a hard time saying goodbye to Mammy, Miss. Smith had put her hand on Venetia's shoulder and whispered that sometimes children feel sad at first. She had given Vanetia a hug and told her that she would be seeing her mother later on after they had sung the goodbye song... and you know what, that's exactly what happened! School wasn't scary, it was a good place to be.

Peter's first day of school had been so full of new experiences that he could hardly get to sleep that night. He was worried about having to go to school the next day and remembered how alone he had felt when Mammy left him at the door of his classroom. He wasn't even sure who his teacher was or what he was supposed to do. The noise of the school bell made him feel even more upset. He had cried and a strange lady had said that he should behave like a big boy. When he had asked for his Mammy he had been told that she was not there. The worst part was when he was teased by some of the other children. They called him a cry baby. The thought of another day of school made Peter want to cry all over again.

To help make the first day a pleasant experience:

** Greet each child by name and make her/him feel welcome.*

** Build trust by letting children know that you can be relied upon. (Don't tell a child things that are not true or trick a child just to make her/him stop crying or behave.) Be patient with children who are slow to "warm up."*

** Let children know what to expect and where possible give children advanced warning of what is going on.*

** Provide enjoyable activities to keep children interested.*

Salutations!

Greetings to **Sheila Williams** of **Grand Mal Pre-school, St. George's.** ***ECE Connection*** is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of September 1996.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

Help!

ECE Connection's copy of THE COMPLETE BOOK OF CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES by Melanie Rice was misplaced during a make-and-take workshop held on May 4th of this year. Your cooperation in locating this valuable teaching resource would be greatly appreciated.

New Teacher Resources

ECE Connection's teacher resource library is growing. The following new titles are available:

Child Abuse by the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario.
Although this book was written for the Ontario experience it offers teachers valuable information. Included is a useful definition of child abuse and information that can assist teachers in recognizing possible indicators of abuse. A special insert has been included to provide teachers with contact information for local resources.

Everyday Bulletin Boards by Tabatha Conti.
Patterns and ideas for creating decorations for walls and bulletin boards. The selection includes: plants, household objects, food, the circus, vehicles, animals, weather symbols, and more.

Piggyback Songs For School by Jean Warren.
Over 200 songs for young children including songs about starting the day, getting acquainted, days of the week, seasons, the calendar, weather, numbers, the alphabet, birthdays, safety, the playground, cleaning up, and more. These simple songs are written to be sung to the tunes of childhood favorites.

Piggyback Songs For Infants & Toddlers by Jean Warren.

Something for very young children! 160 simple new songs written to be sung to the tunes of well known childhood favorites. Topics are familiar to infants and toddlers but are also suitable for 3 - 5 year olds.

Teachers and caregivers are encouraged to make use of these resource books. The above listed titles (and many more) can be obtained from the Ministry of Education, ECE Department. Contact Ministry offices in St. George's at 440-3161 for further information.

("Getting Ready," continued from page 1)

- *Furniture or non-toxic potted plants can be used to divide the space in your room.* Keep these items low enough to allow for total room supervision.
- *Space for you.* Try to set aside a little personal space. A desk or chair can be placed out of the way and gives you a place of your own.
- *Put up a bulletin board or information area.* Choose a location that can be easily seen by parents and other members of staff and post information to keep everyone informed. You might want to start things off by putting up a sign to welcome students and parents/guardians. Post your copy of ***ECE Connection***! Remember to regularly update the information you post.

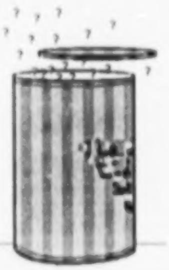
With a bit of imagination and creativity your room can look interesting and welcoming. Your students will notice your efforts and you will feel good about your classroom. You have an important job and deserve an attractive room. Bring in a some fresh flowers for your desk. You are worth it! End

October is Child Month

Theme: "Love the Child."
Focus: "Truancy."

Truancy has been chosen as this year's focus to draw attention to the number of children not attending school. During the month of activities the following areas will be addressed: parent's responsibility, nutrition, the value of reading, Rights of The Child.

You are encouraged to contact the Ministry of Education for details of scheduled activities and to find out how you can become involved.



Have You Seen This Symbol Before?

ECE Connection is assembling a selection of basic classroom material which will be made available through the Min. of Ed., ECE Department. Look for this barrel symbol in future newsletters for updates!

Drawing Template

From time to time ***ECE Connection*** will include an outline or pattern that can be used to help you create classroom decorations or activities. You may wish to use the body outline (shown right) to identify the names of the children in your class or to design an activity for your "All About Me" theme. The following are some suggestions:

* Using plain paper cut out a number of the outlines and encourage each student to decorate her/his own.

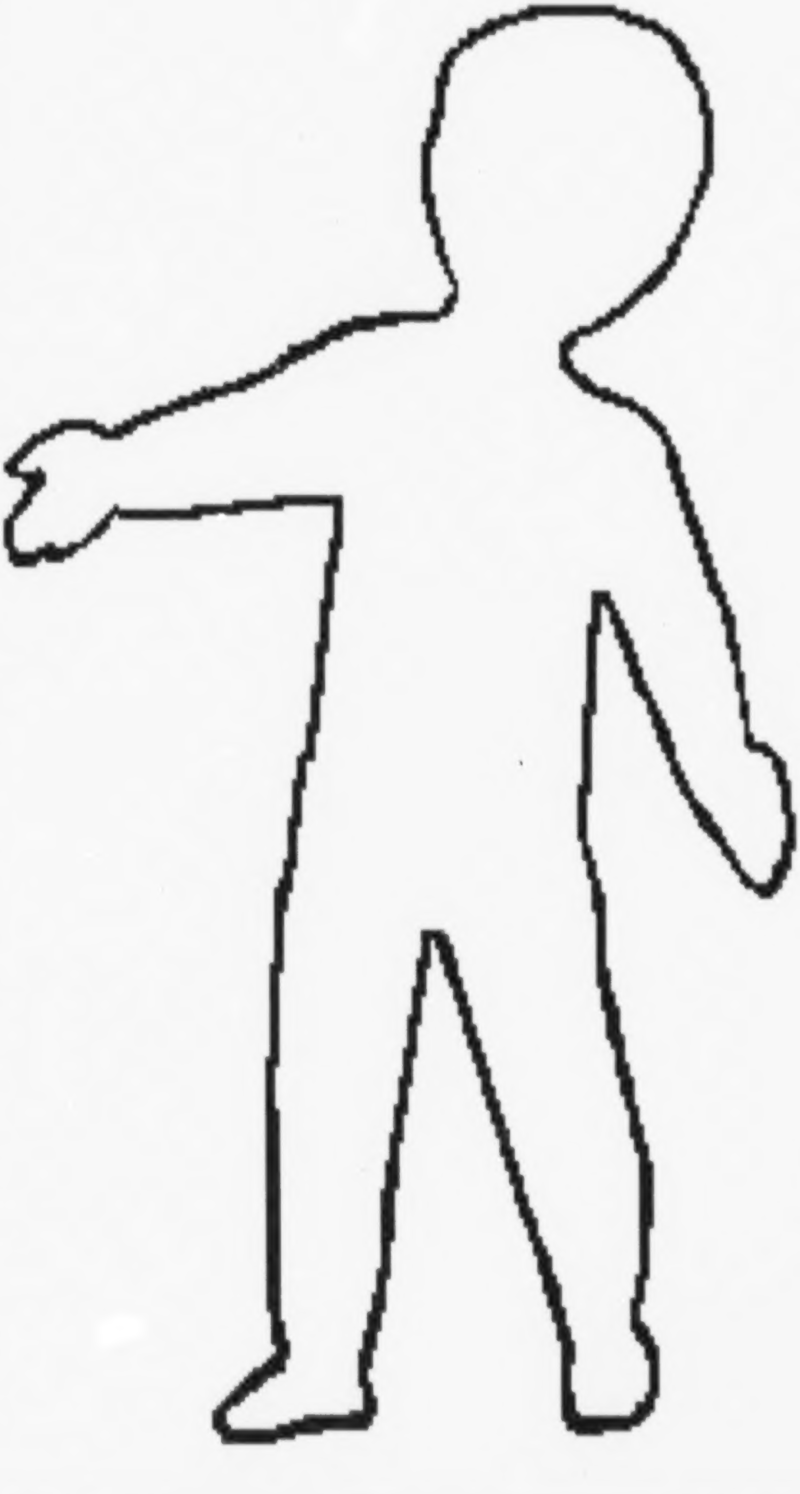
* Use individual outlines as symbols to indicate who is present and who is absent each day. Cut one outline for each child and print the child's name on the outline. Encourage each child in attendance to place her/his outline in a specific location (wall, black board) to show that they are present.

* Count the number of "present" cut-outs and "absent" cut-outs on a daily basis. Discuss concepts such as more/less, yesterday/today.

* Build vocabulary by discussing the placement of the figures, ("Joy has placed her figure *above/below/beside* Keisha's.")

* Discuss the different body parts. Head, neck, arm, hand, chest, leg, foot. What can they do? Where are they located? What details are missing?

Children learn best when they are actively involved. Be patient and avoid punishing children for errors that occur while they are learning. No child should be afraid to try.



E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 2 *October 1996*

GROWING, CHANGING

For those working with young children an understanding of the changes that take place as children grow and develop is important. This knowledge helps teachers and caregivers to provide the most suitable learning experiences for children.

Normal growth and development follows a predictable path. For example, a baby learns to roll over, then to sit, and then to stand. It's the *rate* at which each child develops that differs from one child to the next. One may walk at nine months, another at eighteen months. Early childhood programs should encourage *progress* rather than *winning*. "Learning is a journey not a race!" (Author unknown)

ECE Connection's library carries several resource books that can be used to assist adults in planning activities for children. DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILES (Allen & Marotz) and *AGES AND STAGES* (Miller) are just two of the titles available. In addition, Miss. Anne Watkins' new booklet CHILD DEVELOPMENT (see "Resource News" on page 2) is an excellent guide for those who work with children from birth to two years old.

Having said all of this, how about checking your knowledge of the early childhood years? Just for fun here's a short quiz. Be careful, some of the questions are tricky! Answer 'T' (true) or 'F' (false) in the empty box at the beginning of each statement. The answers have been provided on page 2.

☐ 1. Sucking fills both a physical need (hunger) and an emotional need (comfort) for babies and is necessary for healthy growth and development.

☐ 2. A five year old generally prefers to play alone.

☐ 3. We should expect toddlers to be happy to share toys, etc. with other children.

☐ 4. Boredom during group activities is the most common cause of disruptive behaviour.

☐ 5. If a child has a temper tantrum it's only because s/he is spoiled.

☐ 6. Silly jokes and silly talk (Example, "Hello Mr. Boo-boo Face!") are most common during the preschool years.

☐ 7. Throughout early childhood most children enjoy doing things to displease adults.

☐ 8. Babies like to be held and touched but can become fussy when stimulated too much.

Continued on page 2

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Fine Motor Skills

The term *fine motor* generally refers to the small muscles of the hand and foot. These are the muscles that make movement of fingers and toes possible and let us do things such as pick up a glass of water or wiggle our toes. We are born with very limited control over these (and many other) muscles. Movement and strength improve as we grow and develop. A baby swipes at objects with its fist. The toddler can pick up a small stone using thumb and index finger. The four year old may be able to tie a shoe lace. It takes time and effort to learn to use our muscles... to figure out how much pressure to apply and when. The more we practice and feel a sense of accomplishment in our developing skills the better.

Those who work with young children may feel that it is important to make them do pencil and paper drills so that they can develop good writing skills. Three important points must also be considered. First, the object is to encourage children to use their muscles on a regular basis to develop muscle control. When we force very young children to repeat the same task over and over they are likely to become "turned of." Second, children develop fine motor skills at different rates. Third, paper and pencil tasks require a high degree of muscle control and eye-hand coordination. Children need to start with simple and enjoyable tasks, perfect these, and gradually move on to more complex activities. We want children to be truly ready to write and to find joy in the task. This is more likely to happen when they have been given time to practice and perfect the steps necessary to perform the task.

Use your creativity and imagination to think of many different activities that allow young children to strengthen and develop their fine motor skills. Here are a few examples: playing with playdough, dressing a doll, gardening, playing with sand, washing hands with soap, building with blocks of different sizes and weights, turning the pages of a book, finger plays. What other activities can you think of?

Provide lots of different opportunities for children to use their small muscles. *ECE Connection's* four Fine Motor Skills Kits offer a selection of safety scissors, hole punches and plastic needles. These items give children the opportunity to use their small muscles. A teacher's manual is also included to assist you in planning activities. In addition *ECE Connection's* two bead mazes (example shown right) and Aquaplay Centre promote fine motor development. We encourage you to borrow these resources. For information about these items phone the Ministry of Education, ECE Department at 440-3161.

Reference: Sher, Barbara. *Extraordinary Play With Ordinary Things.* Hilbrook, MA: Bob Adams Inc., 1994.

Growing... Continued from page 1

☐ 9. Most toddlers are able to control their bowels and bladder very well.

☐ 10. Children learn language best when caregivers talk to them about things that interest them, listen, and respond to what the children say.

Remember that each child is different. As educators and caregivers we have the important responsibility of helping every child to be the best s/he can be. It is hoped that you found this quiz enjoyable. Please feel free to write and share your thoughts about this exercise.

Written by S. Tyrrell

Answers: 1 - T, 2 - F, 3 - F, 4 - T, 5 - F, 6 - T, 7 - F, 8 - T, 9 - F, 10 - T.

Resource News

Two excellent reference books are now available:
MATHS AND SCIENCE - A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HELP WITH PLANNING YOUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMME and *CHILD DEVELOPMENT - A GUIDE FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE CARE AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN 0-2 YEARS OLD.*
These books, written by Anne Watkins (VSO Grensave), are very "user friendly" and have been designed for use in Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique. They contain lots of useful information and practical tips for your early childhood program. Copies are available through your Ministry Supervisor. Call 440-3161 for details.

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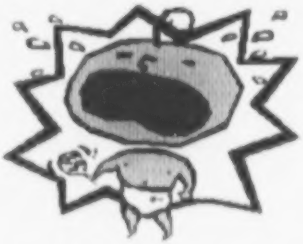
Bring In A Baby

There is nothing quite like "the real experience" to encourage learning. For those working on the **All About Me, My Family, My School** themes the following idea (tried and suggested by Shelley Herder) is guaranteed to raise a few eyebrows!

Have someone bring their baby into your classroom. Arrange a date and time with your guest and confirm the arrangements the day before. It is advisable that the visit be no longer than one hour... a lot shorter with very young children. Prepare your students by telling them about your special visitor ahead of time. (You may want to keep the identity of the guest a secret but give "hints" to get the children thinking.) If your guest is the parent of one of your students be sensitive to the fact that there may be some possessiveness and jealousy. Allow the child to "share" his or her sibling and make positive comments about this fact.

Use the opportunity to stimulate discussion. Name the baby's body parts. "In what way is the baby the same as you?" "In what way is the baby different?"



"How might you tell if the baby is happy/sad/tired/frightened?" "What do we do to care for a baby?" Encourage conversation (speaking and listening) This is a very important part of language development.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Ruby Gunpot** of **Sauteurs S.D.A. Preschool, St. Patrick's**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of October 1996.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

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Editor's Note

I hope your school year is off to a good start. Thank you to those who have taken the time to write or call us. Your comments are helpful as they let us know what you are thinking and help us to determine what works and what does not.

As this barrel symbol on the right indicates, the following is an update on the barrel of teaching supplies: Shipment has been delayed, nevertheless, a barrel is being assembled. Rest assured that it will be ready for shipment by the end of this month. Details will be made available upon its arrival in Grenada.

We have had a request for more drawing patterns and will certainly include these in future newsletters. A pattern book (*Felt Board Fun*) is available through ECE Connection's resource library. Two additional pattern books have been purchased and will be sent with the barrel of supplies. Look out for these.

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Volume 3 - Issue 3 *November 1996*

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Watching Television

Television has become a fact of life in most homes. Even some child care and educational settings use a television as a means of occupying children. Generally children will sit quietly and attend to a program on television. This is very appealing to a teacher or caregiver who needs to take care of other matters or just wants a bit of a break. But there are serious questions that we need to consider when we choose to invest in a television for our child care and educational settings.

The first question is a matter of dollars and cents. Is the investment cost effective... does it really benefit the children? Some experts feel that young children should not be watching television at all. Others feel that between a half-an-hour and one hour is the maximum young children should watch per day. (They also indicate that programs must be *suitable* for children's viewing.) Perhaps the money needed to purchase a television could be put to better use if it purchased items that occupy children for longer? Quality items that encourage active learning (building blocks, a kitchen unit, a water play centre, playground equipment, etc.) keep children busy for hours.

The second question. What are children watching? Violence and other anti-social behaviours are portrayed on television so often that we don't even notice them. *One cartoon figure drops a rock on another. The hero punches the 'bad guy' and wins.* Very young children are not yet able to distinguish between what is real and what is not. They are also far more likely to imitate the behaviours they see. We must ask ourselves whether the programs we allow children to watch are truly suitable. Even programs with little obvious aggression may be portraying attitudes that are not acceptable.

The third question relates to the fact that television viewing is a purely passive activity. When children are siting in front of a television screen they are not involved in any of the activities that are important and necessary for healthy growth and development. When the television is on children are NOT:

- having conversations
- interacting socially
- engaging in physical activity

(Continued on page 2)

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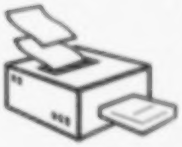
Scrounging

When faced with very tight budgets and few resources, the ability to *scrounge* becomes a matter of survival. Take a moment to think of possible sources for discarded material that can be used in your educational program. Do you know a tailor or seamstress who has fabric scraps? These are great resources for art and craft projects. What about a carpenter or joiner? Wood scraps make very nice building blocks. Ask an appliance store to save you a large cardboard box; cut a door and some windows and you have a terrific house for dramatic play. A few used vehicle tires make great outdoor play items.

HI-TECH PRINTERY on Lagoon Road in St. George's will provide teachers with paper end-cuts. Those interested in receiving paper are asked to drop-off a container clearly marked with your name. Contact Mrs. Aine Brathwaite at 440-1317/8 for additional information.



GRENTEL will supply discarded phones to teachers wishing to use them in their classrooms. These old phones make excellent props for dramatic play and encourage language and social skills development. You are asked to write to Mr. Andre Lewis, Grentel, P.O. Box 119, St. George's with your request. Be sure to include the number of phones you need, the name and address of your school and a contact phone number. It would be helpful if you included directions to your school as well.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Ina Belfon** of **Holy Cross R.C. School, St. Andrew's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of November 1996.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag containing a selection of teaching supplies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible to be chosen. Each month one name is selected from a computer generated list. Look out for the December issue of ECE Connection to see if you are the lucky winner.

Continued From Page 1

- questioning and making decisions about the information they are receiving.

Information gained through watching television is "second hand." It does not have the same educational value as doing "the real thing." Children watch television in a "trance-like" state and the concern is that they are not learning to make decisions and to question. These skills are very important and are learned when children explore and experiment in a safe and supportive environment.

As teachers and caregivers our job is to help each child be the best s/he can be. Children's early years are critical for forming the correct patterns of learning and thinking. The environment we create for children must encourage active learning and insure that children's experiences promote healthy growth and development.

Written by S. Tyrrell. References

Chandler, Daniel. *Children's Understanding of What's Real on Television.* Internet publication.
Large, Martin. *Who's Bringing Them Up?* United Kingdon: Hawthorn Press, 1980.
Ledingham, Jane, et al. *The Effects of Television on Children.* Ottawa: Health Canada, 1993.

OOPS!

Due to a layout oversight in last month's newsletter (Vol. 3, Issue 2) the following information was omitted from the end of the article titled "*Growing, Changing.*"

References
Allen, K. Eileen & Lynn Martoz. *Developmental Profiles.* New York: Delmar Publishers Inc., 1989.
Berger, Kathleen Stassen. *The Developing Person Through Childhood & Adolescence.* New York: Worth Publishers, 1991.
Miller, Karen. *Ages & Stages.* Telshare Publishing Co., 1995.

Apologies to our readers for this error.

Tell A Story

For many of us the holiday season is an exciting time. The anticipation of school vacation, special preparations and social activities are things we enjoy. These things can also cause stress for both adults and children. (For some this period of the year is a reminder of sad times and/or the differences between those who have and those who do not.) Teachers and caregivers can help to lessen some of this tension by planning more physical activity (outdoor games, etc.) and including some thoughtful seasonal activities in their programs. The following story is provided in condensed form. Use it to help you tell a story about sharing and caring for others. Give the girl a name, describe how things looked, bring in props. You may wish to bring in a bottle of water to help you illustrate the story!

A Bottle Of Water

- *A little girl living in a small village often plays alone because her friends tease her. They think that her clothes look old and don't fit her well, she looks so "different."*
- *One day she is playing in the yard and finds a bottle with an unusual stopper. She washes it and fills it with water.*
- *She is pleased with what she has done and shows it to her classmates. They laugh and tease her because the bottle seems to be valueless. She hides the bottle away and forgets about it.*
- *After some time the land gets very dry. The grass dries up, plants die and people have to walk a long way to get water. People begin to treat water, that they had previously wasted, as if it is precious gold.*
- *Just before the Christmas holidays the children are having a party at school. Everyone is supposed to bring something to eat at the party.*
- *The children bring all manner of fancy cakes and sweets but the little girl brings a plain brown bag. No one pays much attention.*
- *At the end of the party everyone is thirsty. There is no water at the school. The children feel VERY thirsty. No one knows what to do.*
- *The little girl opens her paper bag and shares her water. No one makes fun of the bottle of water now. They realize that what they thought was a very ordinary thing is most precious. Just like the little girl.*

You may want to use the outline on the right for a follow up activity. Perhaps your students would like to draw pictures of things that are precious to them in the bottle outline. Maybe you could cut out ten bottle shapes and sing the song *Ten Green Bottles.* (Substitute any colour you wish for green.) The words for the rhyme are:

Ten green bottles, standing on the wall (Repeat)
If by chance one bottle should fall, there'd be **nine** *green...*
(Repeat the verse removing one bottle each time until there are .)

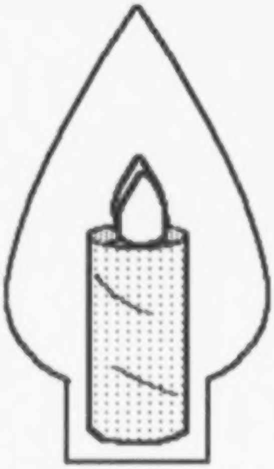
No green bottles, standing in the wall (Repeat)
No green bottles, so none of them can fall
There are no green bottles, standing on the wall.

BOTTLE OUTLINE

Holiday Season Ideas

Dove of Peace

The dove outline below can be used to make Peace Doves out of *stiff paper or cardboard.* These can be hung from a tree branch or attached to a wall. (Let the children know that a group of doves is called a *flock.)* Children can use pieces of *sponge* or *feathers* dipped into *paint* to decorate their dove with feathery designs. Be sure to use the opportunity to discuss the process. Talk about what each child is doing to decorate his/her dove. Talk about the dove being a symbol to remind us about peace. You may wish to write down each child's thoughts about peace. What does Peace On Earth mean to you?

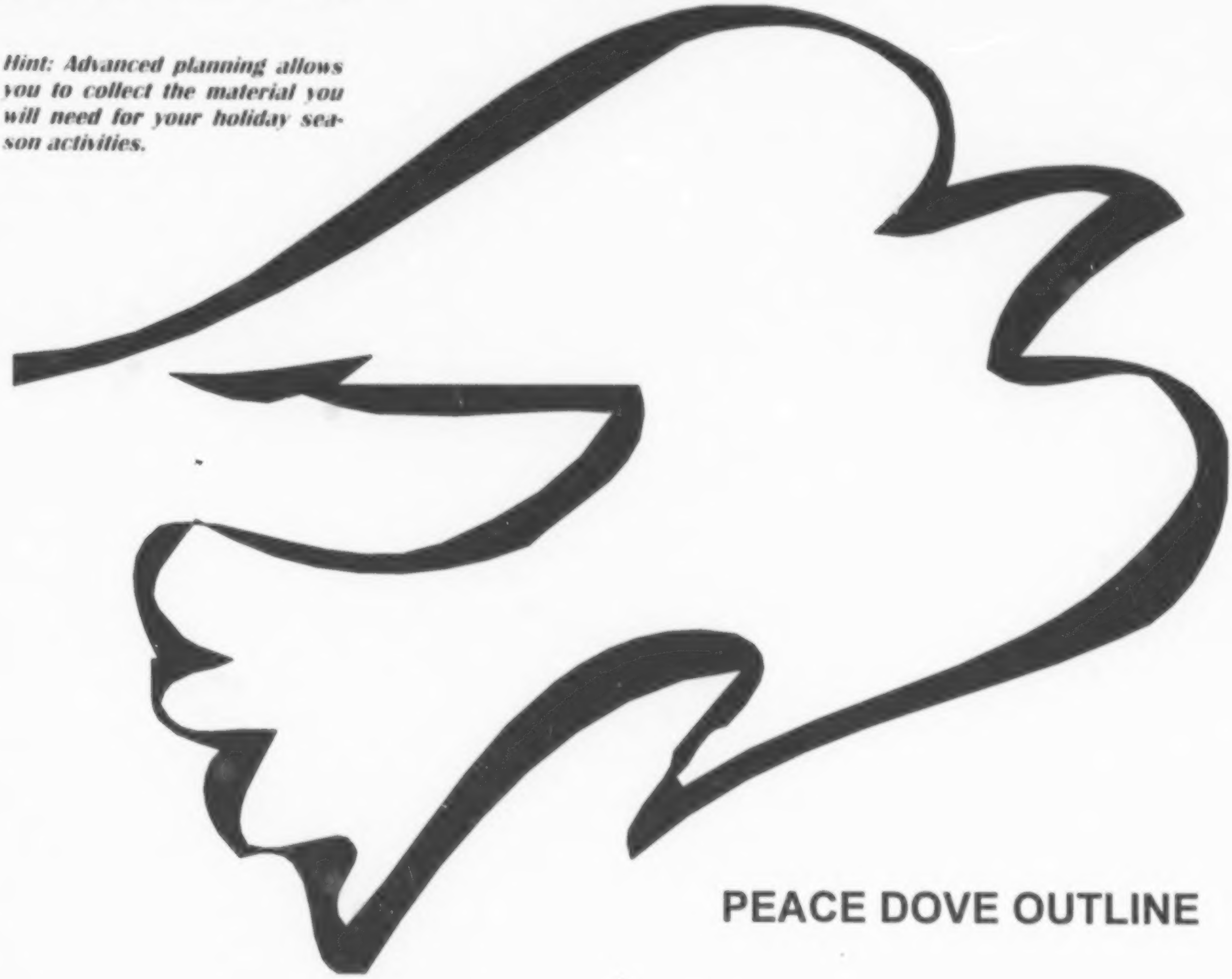


Candle flame outline and candle illustration shown above

Holiday Candles

Have each child *paint a toilet tissue tube* in a colour of her/his choice. Cut out two *yellow paper* "flames" (outline shown left) for each tube "candle." The two flames are *glued or taped* to one end of the tube so that they are facing each other. (See illustration inside flame outline on the left.) Small pieces of coloured paper, or paper cut into leaf shapes, can be glued around the base of the candle for decoration. Very young children may enjoy simply dipping a tube into paint and using it to print circles (Christmas ornaments) on plain paper. Point out what they are doing. "Oh look, a circle shape! Round like a ball, the moon..."

Hint: Advanced planning allows you to collect the material you will need for your holiday season activities.



PEACE DOVE OUTLINE

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 4 *December 1996*

PLANNING FOR JANUARY

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

For some of you the upcoming vacation means several weeks away from your place of work. For others the holiday will be shorter. No matter how long your vacation is try to set aside some time to relax and "recharge your batteries." Taking the time to care for oneself is important as it helps you to better cope with the demanding job of working with young children.

Another important element of effective teaching and care-giving is planning. Before you break for the holidays try to give some thought to what you will be doing when you return to your school or centre. This allows you to gather material and be prepared for your upcoming program. Attractive calendars, magazines and posters are available at this time of year. These can be used to refresh the decorations in your classroom. Pictures of local scenes will make useful resources for next month's *My Country* theme.

For those working with older children, you may find it helpful to give your students advanced notice of upcoming changes. Talk briefly about interesting things that they can look forward to. This helps to develop children's understanding of time. For example, "***Before*** we go on holiday we are doing Christmas activities. ***After*** we have our holiday we will come back to school and talk about the country we live in."

Perhaps a bit of a change in room arrangement, or some new classroom decorations can be organized as *a surprise* for your students when they return after the holidays. Before the holidays tell your class that something in the room will have changed when they come back in January. "I wonder if you will notice what it is?" *Remember that it is important to follow through when you say that there will be something different.* This builds trust and shows children that they are worth the effort. Children learn far more from their experiences than from being told.

The following is a simple suggestion that you might wish to use to introduce your *My Country* theme: Gather several plastic containers and place them on a low table in your classroom.

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ECE CONNECTION IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED TO OFFER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. SERVICE ALSO INCLUDES A TEACHER RESOURCE LIBRARY CONTAINING BOOKS, EDUCATIONAL GAMES/ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM KITS. THESE ITEMS ARE ON LOAN FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE USERS TO HOLD AN ECE CONNECTION ID CARD.

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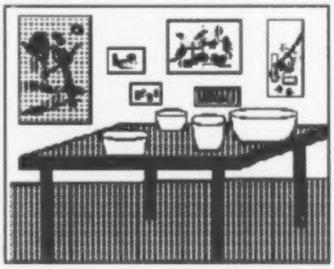
Children's Book Author Visits Grenada

Grenadian born Richardo Keens-Douglas, author, playwright, storyteller, motivational speaker, radio and television host, will be visiting Grenada this month. During his visit Mr. Keens-Douglas will be launching his four children's books. Titles include The Nutmeg Princess, Ladiablesse & The Baby, Freedom Child of the Sea. Mr. Keens-Douglas' most recent work, Grandpa's Visit, is currently enjoying success in North America. This delightful story, beautifully illustrated by Frances Clancy, tells of a young family caught up in the hustle and bustle of North American life. A surprise visit from Grandpa proves to be just the thing to help everyone remember the importance of family and the simple things in life.

ECE Connection is grateful to Mr. Keens-Douglas for the donation of copies of his four children's books. These titles will be made available through the *ECE Connection* resource library.

Readers will be interested to note that Mr. Keens-Douglas will be giving a reading performance in the Grand Anse area (St. George's) on December 19th. This is the scheduled date for the Grenada launch of his children's books. Teachers are invited to attend this performance. Phone 444-2317 for further details.

Planning For January *(continued from page 1)*



Place items common to Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique in each of the containers (different kinds of soil, sand, rocks, shells, spices, etc.) Decorate around the table with lots of pictures of local scenes. Encourage the children to **look at**, **touch**, and **smell** the material. Encourage conversation: "Tell me what you see/feel/smell." "Where do you think you might find —— ?" "I wonder what —— might be used for?" These open ended questions have no right or wrong answers but ask for a child's opinion. When you express an interest in what children say they are encouraged to put thoughts into words. This is an important part of language building. Perhaps children can contribute to the display by bringing in additional items. (If children bring in the same or a similar item be positive. Use the opportunity to discuss the concept of *the same* and *different*!)

Written by S. Tyrrell

USING NEWSPAPER

For young (and not so young) children a sheet of old newspaper is an excellent resource on which to painting or draw.

Thick paint or bright coloured markers/crayons are necessary for this activity. (A limited quantity of powdered Tempera paint is available from the ECE Department, Ministry of Education at a minimal cost.) Give each child a large sheet of newspaper and let him/her paint/colour on it. Children enjoy covering or "changing" the print and pictures and create interesting designs while doing so. Encourage (but do not force) each child to talk about what they are doing. Comment on the colours and on the process. *("I see that you are using lots of red." "You covered the words at the top of your paper." "Tell me about what you are doing.")* As you watch the children work remember that they are doing a lot more than scribbling. They are exercising their minds and bodies: using their small muscles, observing letters, words and pictures and how they are arranged, discovering how things change as they cover them with paint or marker. Important learning is taking place while children explore and experiment.

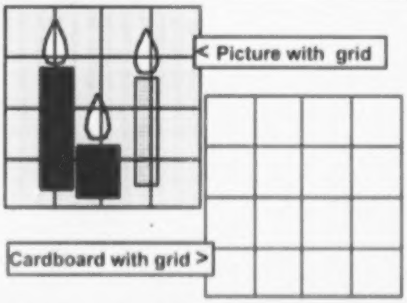
Just a reminder! Before distributing the newspaper check to ensure that the pictures and words on each page are suitable for young children.

Puzzle Match-Up

Here's a simple self correcting matching game that you can make. Use it to provide children with an enjoyable way to practice any number of concepts. (Match capital and common letters, match numerals to numbers, match a colour to the word for that colour, solve simple maths problems, etc.) You will need:

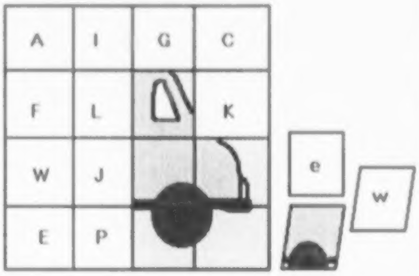
scissors
a ruler
a felt tipped marker
glue
an old magazine
cardboard

Select a large and interesting picture from a magazine. (The picture should fill an 8 x 8 inch square.) Cut two pieces of cardboard the same size as your picture. Glue the picture onto one piece of cardboard. Mark vertical and horizontal lines on each piece of cardboard to form a grid of two inch squares (Example shown above right.)



To make a letter matching game mark a different capital letter in each square on the plain piece of cardboard. Mark the corresponding common letter in the correct square on the *back* of the picture. Cut out each of the picture squares so that your have sixteen separate pieces.

The object of this game is for children to match the correct capital and common letters. If their attempt is correct then the pieces of the pictures fit together to complete the picture. (Example below.)



Salutations!

Greetings to **Maureen Church** of **Nehemiah Pre-School, St. John's**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of December 1996.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

Editor's Note

As I sit at my computer each month I think of you and the children you work with and I wish I could tell you personally just how special you are. Working with young children is not an easy job. The time and effort that must be devoted to being effective teachers may seem to go unnoticed. Nevertheless, the job you do is awfully important. Keep caring, keep trying, keep learning. To a small child it means everything.

Now here's some good news... the barrel is on its way and should be in Grenada by mid-December. It contains a selection of materials that can be used to create in-class resources. The January issue of *ECE Connection* will contain a list of the items included in the barrel and give you information on how to access these items.

Members of the *ECE Connection* team join me in wishing you and your families Season's Greetings. Have a safe and relaxing holiday and a Happy New Year.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 5
January 1997

ECE CONNECTION IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED TO OFFER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. SERVICE ALSO INCLUDES A TEACHER RESOURCE LIBRARY CONTAINING BOOKS, EDUCATIONAL GAMES/ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM KITS. THESE ITEMS ARE ON LOAN FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE USERS TO HOLD AN ECE CONNECTION ID CARD.

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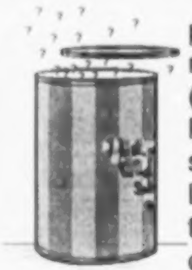
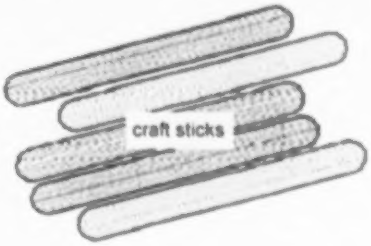
Teacher Resources Now Available



The long awaited barrel has arrived! As promised, a limited supply of teacher resource material is now available from the ECE Unit (Ministry of Education, St. George's). We would like to express gratitude to Mrs. Ivy Harris and her staff for giving up even more of their already limited office space to accommodate these additional supplies. Those interested in viewing or obtaining material should phone the ECE Unit at **440-3161** to arrange a suitable date and time. It should be noted that we are encouraging teachers and caregivers to give a donation toward replacing supplies. Upcoming newsletters will contain suggestions for the use of some of the material. Should you have questions or comments regarding the material please feel free to contact ECE Connection.

The following is a general list of material and supplies available:

- **FELT** *(black, white, brown, red, yellow, dark blue, light blue green, pink)*
- **ADHESIVE VELCRO**
- **HOLE PUNCHES**
- **ERASERS**
- **CHUBBY PENCILS**
- **DUSTLESS CHALK**
- **WHITE PAPER**
- **BEIGE PAPER 'OVALS'**
- **WOODEN CRAFT STICKS**
  (Similar to those used to make popsicles. Shown above.)
- **CLEAR CON-TAC PAPER**
- **BRASS FASTENERS** *(Shown right.)*
- **ASSORTED RULERS**
- **ASSORTED BOOKMARKS & STICKERS**
- **SMALL PLASTIC CONTAINERS WITH SCREW-ON LIDS**
- **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS/MATERIAL**
- **AN ASSORTMENT OF USED CHILDREN'S BOOKS**



Continued on page 3

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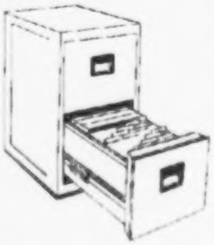
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

Teaching Children Their "Legal" Names

"How they call you? "What's your name?" It's one of the first things that people want to know about us. Our names give us a sense of identity. They tell us who we are, connect us to others and to our past. In Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique it is common to give a child a nickname or "pet" name. This is a name other than the name that is legally given (and registered) at birth. Often this name is the name that is most commonly used. In some instances it is the only name the child knows. Unfortunately this fact causes numerous problems. Imagine for a moment that you know yourself as Margritta Smith. You use this name when you introduce yourself to others. Your employer knows you as Margritta Smith and your best friend has named her daughter Margritta for you. All seems fine until you one day need to apply to get a copy of your birth certificate and find that there is no one registered by that name. After great deal of searching you find that you are actually Magdeline Bedou. The time and effort that it requires to sort these things out is so unnecessary. Nicknames are fine, but children are entitled to know their legal name.

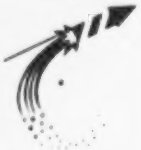


Article 7. No. 1 of **The Convention on the Rights of the Child** states that: *The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.*

Teachers and caregivers can help children to learn their legal names and to feel good about their names and who they are. It is important for us to educate parents as to the importance of giving this information to their children. Take the time to find out the child's legal name and incorporate it into your program activities. Songs that call each child by name, games that use a child's name, and discussions about those that care for us and how we are connected to them are a good place to start. The following is a chant that can be adapted to suit each child:

MARGRITTA SMITH, *MARGRITTA SMITH*, please come out to play.
MARGRITTA SMITH, *MARGRITTA SMITH*, it's such a lovely day.
Put your *SOCKS* and your *RED RIBBON* on.
Tell your *MOTHER* you won't be long.
We'll be waiting at the corner.

Substitute the words in capitals with words that describe the child or an item of clothing s/he is wearing. Make it an enjoyable experience!



Editor's Note

Happy New Year to all! We hope that your holiday celebrations were meaningful and that you were able to relax and enjoy your break.

Nineteen ninety seven is going to be quite a year for ECE Connection. Not only are we working to expand our readership, but we are also looking forward to establishing two additional resource libraries, one in a more northern location of Grenada and the other in Carriacou. These satellite centres will allow teachers and caregivers easier access to kits and other resources.

In addition to offering duplicates of several of the kits already in use, ECE Connection will be providing new kits. These will include Transportation, Plants & Trees, and a selection of kits more suited to toddlers and babies.

We ask those receiving newsletters to invite others to become members of ECE Connection. It is our aim to reach all those who work with young children and we need you to help us.

To those who take the time to let us know how they feel about this service, THANK YOU. Remember, your feedback (both positive and negative) is always welcome and helps us to serve you better.

REDUCING THE NOISE LEVEL

Children can be very noisy. They raise their voices when they are excited, they chatter about any and everything. Much of this "noise" is acceptable, but there are times and situations where it is excessive. Prolonged periods of excessive noise causes stress and will affect children's behaviour. Some children will withdraw when the noise level is too high, others may become over stimulated. In fact, excessive noise levels cause hearing loss and have a negative effect on learning.

The noise level in your classroom depends a lot on certain features:

- room size
- material used for construction
- furnishings and equipment
- number of children

A large empty room tends to have an "echo." A room overcrowded with furniture and children may feel claustrophobic (confining). Think of thirty wooden chairs all being scraped along a concrete floor at the same time. Noise!

One of the dangers of an elevated noise level is that those in the room may begin to "tune out." Listening is a learned skill, very necessary for academic and social success. Children practice listening and paying attention and become better at it. When there is too much noise they are very likely to *stop* listening. This is not what we want.

There are some fairly simple things that can be done to reduce noise levels:

- show children how to lift their chairs so that they make less noise.
- encourage children to speak with *inside voices* (quietly) and reward those who do by commenting on the fact that you notice and appreciate that they are speaking quietly.
- hang pieces of fabric on the walls to absorb some of the sounds. If the fabric is bright and interesting this can be done as a form of decoration. If the fabric is plain you may wish to decorate.
- pieces of carpet also absorb sound. You may find that they make the activity corners in your room more comfortable and inviting.
- egg trays attached to the ceiling make an effective sound baffle. (Rudolph's restaurant in St. George's uses this idea.) This suggestion is more complicated as it involves collecting enough egg trays and attaching them to the ceiling.

Experiment with one or two of these ideas. Perhaps you can come up with some suggestions of your own. Write or call us to let us know what works for you. We would like to share your suggestions with others. Our address and phone number are on page one.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Eva Hastick** of **Springs Day Care, St. George's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of January 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

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Barrel *(cont. from page 1)*

ECE Connection wishes to thank Mrs. A. Morley for contributing most of the children's books and other assorted items. Mrs. Morley is a teacher/librarian living in Ontario. Her donation will assist in the creation of permanent classroom ***reading corners****. Teachers are encouraged to select and display children's reading material in their rooms. This will encourage children's interest in books. More books are being gathered and an upcoming newsletters will feature suggestions to support you in your efforts.*

The following toys and books have been added to ECE Connection's resource lending library:

- **Musical Boom Boxes (3)** *(Suitable for toddlers.)*

Teacher resource books:

- **Everyday Patterns** *(Drawing pattern book)*
- **Nature Patterns** *(Drawing pattern book)*
- **CH.A.D.D. Educators Manual** *(Information and suggestions for dealing with children who are excessively active and who have difficulty paying attention.)*

Children's books:

- **Grandpa's Visit**
- **The Handmade Alphabet**
- **Nature ABC**
- **My First Book of Animals**
- **Hand Rhymes**
- **Arthur's Tooth**
- **My Puppy Is Born**

Future editions of your newsletter will feature resources currently available from ECE Connection. We encourage you to make use of these resources.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 6
February 1997

TALK THE TALK

Conversation is so very important for language development

Take a minute to think about how you learn new words. Do you go to special classes? Do you use a dictionary to look up a new word each day? If you are like most people the new words and phrases you learn come from what goes on around you. You hear a word that you do not know but you guess at its meaning from its context (what comes before and after the word). Once you have an idea of its meaning you can use it in your conversations. As an example let's use the word "wunderkind." Have you ever seen or heard it before? Does it mean anything? What if I said, "At twenty Jason had completed his post secondary education and was president of a computer company... a true *wunderkind*!" Do you have a better idea of the meaning of the word? (By the way, the Oxford Dictionary definition is, "A person who achieves great success while relatively young.") Words are given meaning when we see them "in action." This is an important point to remember because it is how children learn language.

Language development must be a part of every early childhood program. A stimulating program includes interesting activities that encourage **listening** and **speaking**. These are very important prerequisites to later reading and writing skills. Research shows us that children who have early childhood experiences that are rich in language are far better equipped to learn formal reading and writing. Read to the children in your class every day. Engage children in meaningful conversation. Bring in interesting and unusual things for them to talk about. Ask them what they think. Listen to their responses and comment on what they have said. Let children represent their experiences by talking, by drawing pictures, by acting and in song. Encourage their attempts and their interest. As in all things, you are an important model for language. Enthusiasm is catching!

S. Tyrrell

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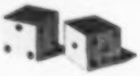
The Value of Table Toys

Table toys include games, puzzles, collectibles and other activities that children use on the table or floor. Though it may appear that the children who use these items are "just playing" it is important to remember that play is a child's work. Table toys are of great educational value. They allow children to practice skills that are needed for healthy cognitive (mental), physical, language, social and emotional development.

Whether purchased or homemade, table toys are an important part of any early childhood education program. Something as simple as a matching game using discarded Christmas cards or a collection of sea shells for sorting can be a table toy.

It is useful for teachers and caregivers to let parents and guardians know about the benefits of table toys. When others understand the many benefits of these activities they are more likely to feel comfortable when these items are used in the classroom. Table toys can:

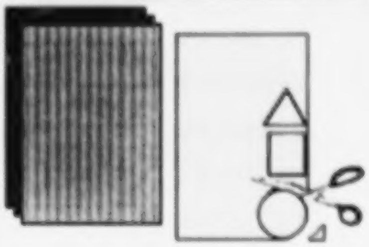
- **aid in the development of fine motor control**
- **improve eye-hand coordination**
- **develop visual discrimination skills**
- **allow children to explore mental concepts later used in reading, writing and computation (matching, classification, seriation...)**
- **offer the opportunity to practice problem-solving**
- **build social skills through small group interaction**
- **help children to gain self-confidence through task completion**



Salutations!

Greetings to **Venetia Ventour** of **St. George's Anglican Junior School**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of February 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

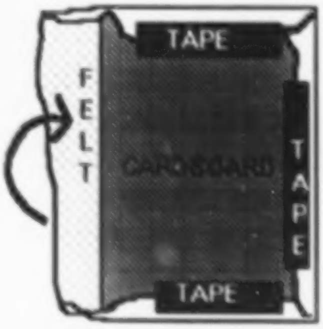


FELT

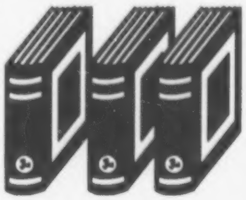
Felt is a type of cloth made from matted wool or synthetic fibres. It does not fray and comes in a wide range of colours so is ideal for making classroom props.

A limited supply of felt is now available through the ECE Unit (Ministry of Education). Strips of adhesive Velcro are also available. These can be cut into very small pieces and used to attach the felt to any surface. (Attach the "hook" side of the Velcro to the felt.)

Several of the books listed on page three of this newsletter contain pattern outlines that can be used to create props. For those wishing to make a felt board on which to display felt cut-outs, try wrapping a larger piece of felt over a piece of cardboard and taping the edges to the back of the cardboard as shown in the sketch below. A piece of looped pile carpet also makes a handy display surface!



ECEC Library Resources



The following is a list of some of the more recent titles that are available to assist teachers and caregivers in creating classroom resources. These and other teacher resource books can be borrowed through the ECE Unit, Ministry of Education (440-3161). We encourage you to save this list as a reference.

Everyday Bulletin Boards by Tabatha Conti - Patterns and ideas for creating decorations for walls and bulletin boards. The selection includes: plants, household objects, food, the circus, vehicles, animals, weather symbols and more.

Do Touch: Instant, Easy Hands-On Learning Experiences For Young Children by Labritta Gilbert - Stimulating and educational activities that can be easily created using simple/basic materials. Lots of hands-on!

Everyday Patterns compiled by Jean Warren - 237 pages of drawing patterns! These include: hats, household items, people, toys & vehicles.

Felt Board Fun by Liz & Dick Wilmes - A book full of drawing outlines suitable for copying to make classroom decorations and activities.

Hands-On Design by Ivan Bulloch - Easy-to-learn design techniques that could be used as the basis for classroom decoration and to make teaching resources. This book offers ideas on how to make: unusual posters, buttons, stationary, and bags.

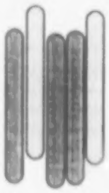
Hands-On Do-It-Yourself by Hannah Tofts - Easy-to-learn decorating techniques that can liven up painted walls, create interesting window coverings, smarten and create furnishings and turn a floor into a piece of art. Teachers may want to use this to assist in the decoration of their classrooms.

Nature Patterns compiled by Jean Warren - 237 pages of drawing patterns! These include: flowers, leaves, plants & trees, weather & sky, foods, fruits, vegetables.

Curriculum Kit Feature

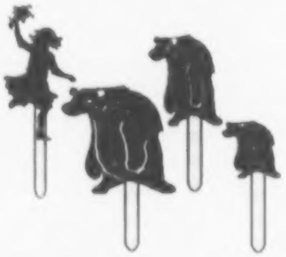
Both ECE Connection's Special Animals kit and Our Beaches & Seas kit are based on things found in the local environment. Each kit contains material for hands-on activities and a teacher's manual that offers suggestions of interesting things that teachers can make and do. Remember, the more children are able to see, hear, touch, smell and taste when they are learning the more they learn. These kits are particularly suited to your My Country theme.

Craft Sticks



These flat wooden sticks with rounded ends are safe and sturdy. They can be used for a variety of games and activities. A limited quantity of craft sticks are available from the ECE Unit, Ministry of Education. You can also collect discarded popsicle sticks and use them in the same manner.

Craft sticks can be used to make puppets for storytelling activities. Attach a picture that represents a character or object in a story or rhyme to the end of the stick. Let children hold the stick puppets and act out the story as you read/tell it to them. Some of the props for *Goldilocks & The Three Bears* are show below.



Your puppets can be stored by placing the sticks in a can or sticking them into a piece of Styrofoam.

When children act out stories they practice listening skills, build memory, recall and comprehension skills, and improve vocabulary. Pretending is an important part of children's play and is connected to later academic success.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 7 *March/April 1997*

ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Service also includes a teacher resource library containing books, educational games/activities and curriculum kits. These items are on loan free of charge but require users to hold an ECE Connection ID card. Comments, question and suggestions are welcome. Write:

ECE Connection
P.O. Box 187
St. George's
Grenada
Fax/phone: **444-0528**
www.spiceisle.com/ece/

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PS 026905

The first of two articles on...

SELF ESTEEM

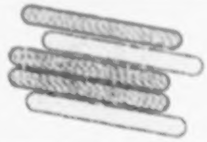
The word *self esteem* is often used when we discuss people's feelings about themselves. We refer to a person's self esteem as being *low* or *high*, but what exactly is this *self esteem*? According to Marian Marion (1987) it is our sense of who we are in relation to others, our sense of personal worth. We are not born with this sense. It is something that is built gradually as a result of our experiences with others. It also relates directly to how we behave. To illustrate, let us imagine that you are asked stand in front of a classroom full of adult visitors. They have come to listen to you talk about your program. It can be quite nerve wracking having to do this, but you have been told many times and by different people that you run an excellent program. Not only that, your audience looks supportive and eager to hear you speak. Likely you feel good about your skills as a teacher and despite being nervous you are able to give a good talk. The small mistakes you make don't cause much of a problem... your audience knows that it is difficult to do what you are doing and is very understanding.

Now picture yourself in front of a group who are openly critical of what you do. They have complained about your skills as a teacher and you have often overheard them talking with each other about your problems. They even make jokes about your shortcomings. Naturally you feel humiliated and incompetent, ashamed of yourself and even angry at these people. During your talk you stutter and forget what you were going to say... a disaster!

> *What we say and how we say it has a lasting effect.*

Feelings of shame and doubt often prevent us from being successful and from learning new things. We fear failure so do not even try. Children are particularly vulnerable to adult words and actions. They are very aware of how the adults in their lives feel about them; they pick up these attitudes and soon begin to feel the same way about themselves. What we say and how we say it has a lasting effect. As teachers and caregivers it is our responsibility to help each child be the best s/he can be. We begin by helping each child to feel that his feelings matter, that she is capable and is supported.

In May's issue we will look at some ways to build children's self esteem. Article by S. Tyrrell. Reference: Marion, Marian. Guidance of Young Children. Merrill Publishing Co., Ohio. 1987.

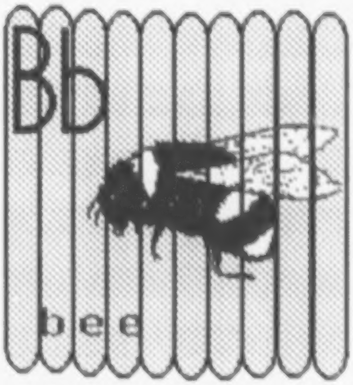


Another Craft Stick Idea

Craft sticks can be used to make a quick-and-easy mini puzzle. You will need the following supplies:

- about ten craft sticks for each puzzle
- felt tipped markers or other suitable writing material
- masking tape.

To make a puzzle press the craft sticks onto the sticky side of a piece of masking tape so that the sticks are lying flat, side by side. Draw a simple picture or design on the sticks so that there is part of the design on each stick. You may want to include letters or words (as shown in the diagram below). Colour your design to make it more appealing. Lift the sticks off the tape and you have your puzzle. To store the puzzle, place the sticks in a container so that all pieces of the puzzle are kept together. To assist children in putting together the puzzle you might want to draw another copy of the design on a separate sheet of paper or cardboard and include it in the container.



Remember that books with drawing patterns are now available from ECE Connection's resource library. These can be used to help you create your mini puzzles.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Jennifer Clark Jeremiah** of **Grenville, St. Andrews**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of April 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible. Each month one name is chosen from a computer generated list. Check your May issue to see if your name appears.

Planning Effective Lessons

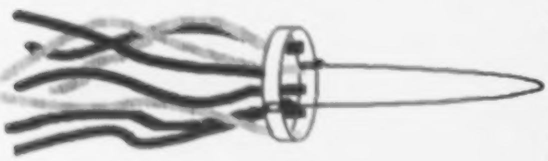
Imagine, you are standing in front of twenty-five restless children trying to describe the concept of matching pairs. "Two things that are the same." you say. As you talk you are thinking. "If only I had that box of buttons from home, then I would have some examples to show the children, to let them practice!" Advanced planning is the key to success when creating an effective lesson. Planning helps to insure that all material required is on hand and that you, the teacher, have a good understanding of the information being presented. Mind you, all the planning in the world is not a guarantee that everything will go smoothly... we all know that when dealing with children anything is possible! But planning does make success much more likely.

To help you plan an effective lesson, a lesson planning outline is provided on page four. Please remember that this is a guide, intended to assist you in planning a thoughtful and suitable lesson. You are encouraged to adapt the outline to suit your needs.

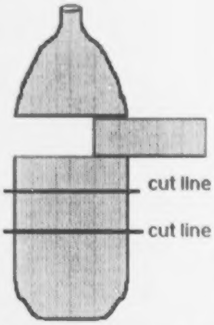
See page 4 for lesson plan...

An Activity for Easter

Here's a simple and attractive activity that is well suited to the windy days of Easter - a wind sock.



Material: several large (2 litre) plastic soft drink bottles, coloured crepe or tissue paper, tape, scissors, string.



Method: Cut the plastic bottles (as shown right) so that you have several two inch wide circles. Cut the crepe paper into strips about one and a half inches wide and twenty four inches long. (You will need about eight strips for each plastic circle.) Have the children tape one end of each strip of crepe paper to the inside of the plastic circle, leaving a little space between each strip. Tie a length of string on either side of the circle to serve as a handle (as shown above). Allow your students to take their wind socks outside.

While constructing the wind socks use the opportunity to *discuss what is being made*. Ask your students *what they think will happen when they go outside*, discuss *what actually happens* when they take their wind socks outdoors.

Adapted from an activity in Crafts by Jean Warren, Monday Morning Books, 1983.

An Action Rhyme

My Pony

I had a little pony, I fed him/her oats and hay,
I open up the stable door, my pony runs away.
S/he goes galloping here, galloping there,
Galloping everywhere.
Never stopping 'til I say,
"Whoa my pony, welcome home!"

To act out the rhyme have a child stand embraced in your arms. Start to chant the rhyme. When you say "I open up the stable door..." release the child and let him/her gallop about until you chant "Whoa my pony..." Hug the child as s/he returns to your arms once more and then allow another child to have a turn. Be sure to let every child have a turn and encourage those waiting to chant the words with you.

This activity fosters listening skills and gives children a chance to use their large muscles. It's also a lot of fun. Words and actions for this rhyme were provided by Tina Sykes. Thanks Tina!

Editor's Note

Easter falls at the end of March this year. As most schools and daycares will be on vacation during the end of March and beginning of April, we have decided once again to combine the March and April newsletter into a four page edition. We will return to our regular three page format for our May issue.

It is gratifying to see that teachers and caregivers are making use of the supplies provided for creation of classroom resources. Please let us know your thoughts about these items as it helps us to serve you better.

More books for in-class libraries are being collected. Those who wish to set up book corners are encouraged to do so. Suggestions for helping you to create a book corner in your classroom will be in May's newsletter.

ECE Connection is delighted to announce that duplicate kits will soon be available. A grant, generously provided by the Micro Project Scheme of the German Embassy in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, has enabled us to create additional kits. This will allow us to establish resource centres in Grenville and in Carriacou.

It is hoped that these centres will be up and running by the middle of May. Look out for more information in upcoming newsletters.

A Lesson Plan

Five general areas to consider when preparing a lesson are written in **LARGE** capital letters. A more detailed breakdown is provided in **SMALLER** capitals. Examples and/or descriptions are provided in ***italics***.

CURRICULUM AREA:

Maths, Language, Social Studies, Science, Art, Music, Gross Motor, Fine Motor...

AGE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN:

What age or developmental level is your lesson best suited to? Is your lesson designed for the whole class or is it better suited to a small group... how many children?

PREPARATION:

GOALS - *What general skills will this lesson promote? (Example, "To develop visual recognition skills".)*

OBJECTIVES - *How will you achieve your goal(s)? Your objectives must relate to your goal(s) and be measurable. (For example, "When given five pairs of assorted buttons the child will sort them into matching pairs.)*

PREPARATION OF MATERIAL - *List all material required and method used to get it ready.*

DEVELOPMENTAL SKILL NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS - *What must a child already need to know in order to perform the activity or understand the lesson.*

IMPLEMENTATION:

INTRODUCTION - *How will you begin the lesson? What will attract the children's attention?*

STEPS OF PROCEDURE - *Details of how the lesson/activity will progress.*

GUIDELINES - *Information that must be given to the children about their role in the lesson or activity. (Example, "You need to sit and listen." "Each of you will be given ten buttons to sort.")*

TEACHER'S ROLE DURING ACTIVITY - *What will* **you** *be doing? Describing, questioning, observing, encouraging...?*

CLOSURE - *How will you end the activity and smoothly move on to the next part of your day?*

DISCUSSION:

VOCABULARY - *What words can be promoted/used? (Example, if you are talking about matching pairs of buttons: arrange, compare, different, exact, identical, match, pair, same...)*

FACTS/CONCEPTS - *Things that the children will understand. (Example, "Buttons can be sorted into groups." "The same buttons can be sorted in different ways.")*

QUESTIONS TO ASK - *What questions can you ask the children? Your questions should help the children to come to an understanding of the concepts you are teaching. Instead of questions that require yes or no answers, try to form your questions so that children are encouraged to offer their opinions. (Example, Instead of, "Did you enjoy matching the buttons?" you could say, "What did you like about the activity?")*

IDEAS FOR EXTENDING THE EXPERIENCE - *How might the lesson be reinforced in other areas of your program? (Example, the different buttons on clothing could be examined and discussed. Children could look for matching pairs of items in the classroom.)*

Teachers are encouraged to evaluate each lesson/activity after it is completed. Ask yourself the following questions: What worked? What didn't work? Why? How can things be done differently next time? In this way we improve on our skills. We are all learners!

Reference: Adapted from a Durham College (Oshawa) ECE Department program plan outline.

The following are the words to a song written and contributed by a young man working in the field of early childhood education. ECE Connection wishes to thank Rick for giving us permission to publish his work.

Pains of Life

In a face that doesn't lie,
There's a pain that doesn't die
In the shade of saddened eyes,
Are the shadows of a weak disguise

The burden of a heavy heart,
Always helps the tears to start,
In fear of the hand in power
Striking down hour after hour.

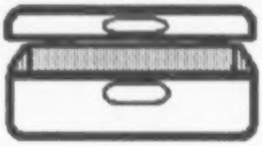
Chorus
They're the faces of our children,
The pains of life today.
Spending time learning to survive
Instead of using it to play.
The lashes of an evil hand,
Coming down upon their world.
Making dreams turn into nightmares
For every boy and girl.

It is happening everywhere,
And surely it isn't fair.
Why must they live in fear,
If it wasn't their choice to be here?

We all must work together,
To rid all the hurt forever.
So our children can be free,
That's the way this world should be.

Ricardo Bettencourt, 1996

New Resource Centres



The new kits are in Grenada! (A smaller shipment of backordered items is to follow.) As mentioned in previous newsletters, two additional resource centres are being established. One centre is located upstairs of the Agricultural Department in Carriacou and will serve that Island and Petit Martinique. For information contact Ms. Keturah Benjamin, Early Childhood Education Officer - 443-7338. The second is still in need of a home. The preferred location is in the Grenville area. We encourage readers to offer suggestions as to a suitable site. The following is a list of requirements:

- A central location, easily accessible by bus.
- A room, clean and in good repair so that no weather damage will harm the kits and books.
- The room must be properly secured. Locks will be provided by ECE Connection. ECE Connection will purchase shelves, etc. and pay the carpenter who is hired to do this job.

Suggestions should be sent to Ivy Harris at the Ministry of Education (ECE Department), St. George's. The phone number is 440-3161.

The shipment of resources includes duplicates of the kits titled: Numbers, The Alphabet, Colours & Shapes, My Body... All About Me and The Food We Eat. In addition the following NEW kits are available: Travel, Plants & Trees. A number of kits designed for very young children have been included. These toddler kits include: Dinner's Ready! Shapes & Colours, Magnificent Me! Things That Go. A selection of mini kits has also been created: Board Books (for toddlers), Dinosaurs (a maths kit for older children), More Fine Motor and Ten Trolls are among these. The following is a list of other resources that will be available at each of the resource centres: Aquaplay (a water play centre), Mega Bloks (large building blocks), Parachute (an outdoor gross motor game, Toddler Activity Table and a selection of decorative and educational classroom posters. Teacher resource books will also be available.

The kits and others teacher resources are available free of charge for a two week loan period. Teachers and caregivers holding valid ECE Connection ID cards are invited to make use of these resources. An official opening is planned for the new centres but kits will be available as soon the resource centres are set-up. Look for further information in upcoming newsletters.

ECE Connection

Volume 3 Issue 8 *May 1997*

ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Service includes a teacher resource library containing books, educational games /activities and curriculum kits.

Readers' comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome. Write to us at:

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MORE ABOUT SELF ESTEEM

The Second of Two Articles

As we look around our classrooms we notice that some children seem to fit right in while others take every ounce of patience and skill we can muster. The "easy" ones are a pleasure. The "difficult" ones tend to be just the opposite. Feelings of anger and frustration are only natural when we are faced with a challenging child. It is how we deal with these feelings that is important.

A child who continually behaves in a way that challenges us is likely to receive more than his share of negative messages. *"PETER MARTIN, STAY IN YOUR SEAT! I'M TIRED OF TALKING TO YOU... YOU'RE ALWAYS MISBEHAVING!"* Young Peter (and everyone else) has probably heard this sort of comment many times before. The problem is that it is reinforcing the very things that Peter's teacher wants him to change.

You will recall that children learn about themselves as a result of their experiences with others. Teachers and caregivers hold an important position in children's lives. Approval or disapproval is communicated to a child through word and deed. A child who hears very little other than negative comments about herself and who is treated with little regard to her feelings is likely to model this behaviour.

In our dealings with children and other adults we must recognise and model the behaviour we want to see. The following is a list of some things that teachers can do to model acceptable behaviour and build self esteem:

- Value each child's efforts. Recognise progress rather than perfection.
- Speak in a respectful tone.
- Communicate privately with each child things that others need not hear. For example, instead of shouting across the room when a child is misbehaving, walk over to the child, bend down to his eye level and speak quietly. No child likes to be humiliated or embarrassed.
- Talk with children. Recognise and discuss feelings, needs and thoughts. (For example, "Peter I know that it's hard for you to sit still. Right now you have to finish your work. We will be going outside in ten minutes and you can run around there.")
- Listen (really listen) to what children have to say and respond to their concerns and questions.
- Where appropriate, allow children to make choices and solve problems for themselves. This builds feelings of competence.

Every child has areas of strength and areas of need. It is our job to help each child to feel capable and valued. We do this by demonstrating care and respect.

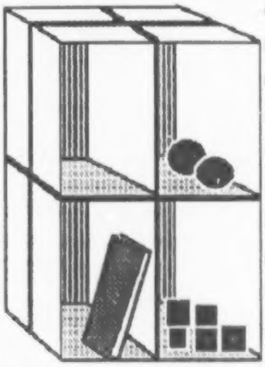
By S. Tyrrell. Reference: Marian Marion, Guidance of Young Children, Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio. 1987.

PS 026905

Setting Up In-Class Library Corners

Encouraging a love of books is one of the most powerful incentives to reading. To assist teachers in establishing in-class book corners ECE Connection is providing a limited number of gently used children's books. These books will be given to members holding valid ECE Connection ID cards and who demonstrate a willingness to regularly provide children with the opportunity to use books for pleasure. For further information contact the ECE Department (Min. of Education, St. George's) at 440-3161.

To set up a library corner all you really need is a place to display books. For those with very limited space, a sturdy cardboard box will do. Decorate and label the box to make it inviting. You may even want to tape several boxes together for a more elaborate book display. (See sketch from September '96 newsletter below.) For those who have a bit more space a piece of carpet and some cushions make a cosy nook for reading. A low table or shelf can be made out of a piece of board and concrete blocks. This shelf can also be used to display your books. Provide time daily for children to look at and read books. This shows that you feel books are important. A daily story time is relaxing and enjoyable.



As a reminder to others of the value of books you may wish to post the information listed below.

OUR LIBRARY CORNER

This library corner provides a quiet place for children to enjoy books. When children look at books and listen to stories they...

- expand their imaginations
- gather new information and adjust to new experiences
- gain exposure to print as a means of communication
- become familiar with different literary styles (stories, poems, biographies, rhymes, etc.)
- practice fine motor skills (turning pages, etc.)

Dianne Trister Dodge, Creative Curriculum

Salutations!

Greetings to **Abigail Richard of Beaulieu New Testament School, St. George's.** *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of May 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to you.

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THANKS!

ECE Connection would like to recognise the assistance given by PJP Exporting [GASSL]. Prompt, professional service at a VERY reasonable price has allowed us to provide our resource centres with additional resource material. We are very much obliged to Peter [and Eileen]!

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 3 - Issue 9 *June/July 1997*

Graduation Ceremonies

What are your thoughts about formal end-of-the-year ceremonies for preschoolers? How do you mark the occasion at your school or centre? In past years some of our readers have expressed their concern about preschool graduation ceremonies. We would like to share two of these:

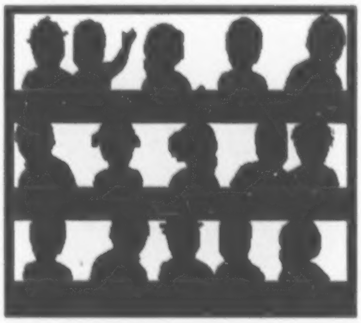
"Rental or purchase of gowns is a hardship for some."

"Graduation lasts a long time and these small children are expected to sit still and behave."

Comments such as these are most welcome as they allow us to examine what we do and why we do it. Through this process we educate ourselves and better serve children.

The following information pinpoints common concerns about preschool graduation ceremonies:

- Too much time is spent rehearsing for graduation ceremonies. Hours of practice take away from more important play-oriented learning.
- During graduation ceremonies too much time is spent waiting. Very young children are expected to sit quietly for long periods. Passive participation is difficult for many children and does not promote meaningful learning.



- Some children find performing in front of adults embarrassing and frightening.
- The concept of graduation has little meaning for children of this age.

Concerns expressed do not mean that graduation from preschool should not be celebrated. Celebrating children's growth and development is most desirable. However, our ceremonies should be child-centred.

How can we make our gradu-

(Continued on page 3)

ECE CONNECTION IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED TO OFFER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. SERVICE ALSO INCLUDES A TEACHER RESOURCE LIBRARY CONTAINING BOOKS, EDUCATIONAL GAMES/ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM KITS. THESE ITEMS ARE ON LOAN FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE USERS TO HOLD AN ECE CONNECTION ID CARD.

READERS' COMMENTS, QUESTION AND SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. WRITE:

ECE CONNECTION
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PS 026905

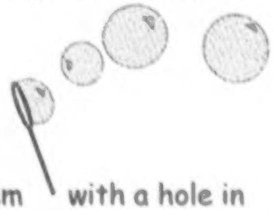
Some Cool Ideas For Hot Weather

Water Painting

Fill a container with water and let children use a large old paint brush to "paint" on concrete or a similar flat outdoor surface. Discuss with each child what s/he is doing and what happens to the water that was used.

Washing

Tie a low line outdoors and provide a bowl of water, some pegs and some doll's clothes or fabric. Let the children "wash" the clothes and hang them out to dry. Discuss what they are doing during the process.



Bubbles

To make bubble solution, mix 1 cup warm water with 4 Tblsp. liquid dish soap and 1/2 tsp. of sugar. Use just about any item with a hole in it (drinking straws, a loop of string, a piece of wire bent to make a circle) to make lots of bubbles. Talk about what is happening when you do this activity.

Frozen Bananas

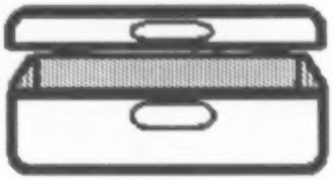
Peel ripe bananas, wrap each in foil, and place them in a freezer. When frozen they make a wonderfully refreshing and creamy snack... almost like ice cream!

Salutations!

Greetings to **Kim E. Roberts** of **St. Andrew's Methodist School, Grenville**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of July 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected at random from a computer generated list. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible each month. Check next month's newsletter to see if your name appears.

Resource Centre Update



The new resource centre in Carriacou has received its curriculum kits at last. Additional resource material and select items (unavailable at the time the original shipment was sent) will follow.

ECE Connection members in Carriacou and Petit Martinique wishing to borrow kits are asked to contact Mrs. Keturah Benjamin at 443-7338. Our thanks to Mrs. Benjamin for facilitating the housing and distribution of these kits. (The Carriacou Resource Centre is located upstairs of the Agricultural Department.)

We are still searching for a home for the second Grenada resource centre. In the meantime kits and other material slated for this centre can be borrowed through the St. George's branch. In addition, duplicates of our most popular kits are now available for members served by the St. George's resource centre. Please contact Mrs. Ivy Harris at 440-3161 for further information.

Our thanks to Mrs. Harris and her staff for their continued support of ECE Connection. Despite very limited office space, the new kits have somehow been accommodated. Bravo!

During The Holidays...

Although next term may seem a long way off, now is the best time to start planning for September. Planning is one of the most important elements of a good programme.

The job you do is demanding and stressful. During the holidays take time to relax. It is important for those who nurture others to care for themselves as well.

Take time to think about the past school year. What worked... what things happened that you would like to see happen again? Congratulate yourself for your successes. Share your ideas with others.

Take time to think about things that were not as successful as you'd hoped. Consider how they might be changed to improve the situation. Discuss your thoughts with your colleagues. Others may be able to offer helpful suggestions. We are all learners!

The following quote was given to participants during an ECE teacher development workshop:

"It is impossible to feel good about yourself if you are doing things that you are not proud of. To improve your self-esteem, it is essential that you stop doing things you don't feel proud of and start doing things you can respect and admire."

Author Unknown

Continued from page 1

ation celebrations more meaningful for the children and the adults who attend? The following list offers a few alternative suggestions.

- Invite parents/guardians to see a display of their children's art work.
- Have a family picnic with games, stories and singing.
- Ask parents/guardians to contribute something to a refreshment table.
- Make up a symbolic bridge and have the teacher walk across it with each child to indicate that the child has crossed to another class or school.
- Have the children help you write a story about their year at school. Let them help to illustrate it and read it to their parents.
- Write a few (positive) words about each child and read them as each child is given a memento of graduation (a book mark, certificate, etc.)

Remember that your graduation ceremony should be short and should involve active participation by children.

Note: ECE Connection wishes to thank Lucinda Stewart (Early Intervention Program Director, Ohio State University) for allowing us to include some of her thoughts regarding concerns about preschool graduations in this article.

S. Tyrrell

Editor's Note

Readers may be somewhat surprised to receive a combined June and July edition of ECE Connection. Our apologies to those who had anticipated a separate June newsletter. Due to recent upgrading of our computer system we were unable to get the June edition out in a timely manner. The good news is that our new computer system promises to be faster and more efficient. In the mean time it offers a few challenges!

This newsletter marks the final edition of volume three. We start our fourth year of publication with our September 1997 edition! This will be another expanded edition and will offer readers suggestions for the beginning of the school year. The September issue will also contain information about an upcoming contest. Copies of the September newsletter will be mailed out in late August. Look out for your copy.

We would like to thank those who take the time to contact us and give us feedback regarding our services. Your thoughts provide us with valuable information to help us to serve you better.

To our readers and supporters, know that you are special and that the work you do is vital to children. Have a safe and pleasant holiday.

Play Is How Children Learn... It's Children's Work

The following information is provided as a reminder about the value of play. You may wish to share this information with parents or use it to design a larger poster or a series of small signs that can be placed in your classroom.

WHEN YOUR CHILD BUILDS WITH BLOCKS:

- She learns to use her imagination for creative purposes and has the satisfaction of being able to make something.
- She learns about sizes and shapes, weights and balances, height and depth, smoothness and roughness.
- She is exercising her body.
- She learns to play with others.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PAINTS:

- He is more concerned with the process he is going through than with a finished product. This is how it should be for this stage in his development.
- He learns about colors and how he can use them.
- He learns to use his imagination and transfers his ideas to paper.
- He gets emotional satisfaction from being able to express himself.
- He learns how to use small muscle coordination to handle a brush.
- He learns to make choices and decisions.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS OUTDOORS & USES OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT:

- She learns how to use her body effectively.
- She experiences joy in achieving a skill.
- She has fun and relaxation found in bodily movement.
- She learns the limitations of her body.
- She learns safety and caution.
- She learns to take turns and to share a piece of equipment.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS IN THE HOUSEKEEPING AND/OR DRAMATIC PLAY AREA:

- He explores the roles of others (mothers, fathers, children, doctors, teachers, etc.) and understands what it feels like to play at being somebody other than himself.
- He learns how to use his imagination.
- He learns how to cooperate with other children.

WHEN YOUR CHILD MAKES A GIFT OUT OF PAPER & PASTE:

- She learns about doing things for others.
- She learns how to use materials like scissors and paste/glue.
- She learns how to use her imagination to make the kind of present she has in mind. Again, the process, NOT the finished product, is important to her.
- She learns about shapes, sizes, colors, and textures.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS IN SAND & WATER:

- He finds it soothing to bury his hands in sand or pour water in and out of cups.
- He is able to relax with these types of media and centre his attention on a task.
- He has an opportunity to play alone and not have to compete with other children as with some activities. This is especially important to a child who has trouble getting along with others.
- He has a great opportunity to learn about size and measurement, experimenting with measuring spoons, cups and different sized containers.
- He learns which kinds of things float in water.
- He is not concerned with a final product so he does not find it frustrating.

WHEN YOUR CHILD WORKS WITH PUZZLES:

- She has an opportunity to work alone or with other children.
- She gains satisfaction in completing a puzzle and builds her self-confidence.
- She has an opportunity to improve her eye-hand coordination.
- She will use skills learned in doing puzzles later when she learns to read - putting letters to sounds, making words with letters, and making stories with words.

WHEN YOUR CHILD LISTENS TO STORIES OR LOOKS AT BOOKS:

- He learns to listen.
- He has an opportunity to increase his vocabulary by learning new words read to him.
- He learns about different concepts, people and places.
- He learns to enjoy books and reading.
- His mind is stimulated, visualizing the things he is hearing about.

WHEN YOUR CHILD COOKS:

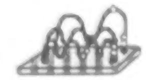
- She learns to follow directions.
- She stimulates and used all five senses.
- She learns to recognize colors and shapes from different kinds of foods and kitchen utensils.
- She has an opportunity to use different tools and equipment to improve small muscle coordination.

WHEN YOUR CHILD LISTENS TO MUSIC, SINGS, OR DANCES:

- He learns to appreciate music from different countries, cultures, and time periods. He learns to express himself and his ideas.
- He increases his vocabulary.
- He gains satisfaction from participating in an activity that can be fun, physical, and/or enriching.

WHEN YOUR CHILD USES MANIPULATIVE ACTIVITIES:

- She explores new concepts, practices emerging skills, and reinforces skills already mastered.
- She develops fine motor practice.
- She learns about classifying, sorting, predicting, problem solving, and analyzing results.
- She develops her knowledge of the world around her using real objects and concrete examples.
- She learns how to learn.



WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS WITH PUPPETS:

- She can begin to understand the feelings of others.
- She can role-play and perhaps find solutions to situations that may disturb her.
- She stretches her imagination.

Note: The above listed information was obtained from an ECE List Service. Portions of the material have been modified. The information was provided for general use by those who work with young children. The original author is unknown.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 1 *September 1997*

ECE CONNECTION IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED TO OFFER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. SERVICES ALSO INCLUDE TEACHER RESOURCE LIBRARIES CONTAINING BOOKS, EDUCATIONAL GAMES/ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM KITS. THESE ITEMS ARE ON LOAN, FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE USERS TO HOLD AN ECE CONNECTION ID CARD.

READERS' COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. WRITE:

ECE CONNECTION
P.O. BOX 187
ST. GEORGE'S
GRENADA
FAX OR PHONE MESSAGES:
444-0528

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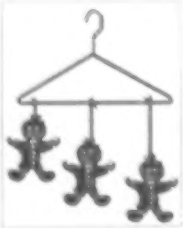
First Day Back

As we prepare our classrooms for the new school year it might be helpful to keep in mind that the time and effort put into setting up a room sends a message to those who use the room. Stand back and look at your room. Does it say "welcome"? Experts in the field of early childhood education have found that an attractive and orderly environment plays an important part in reducing children's stress and misbehaviour.

The following are a few simple suggestions to help you set-up your classroom:

- **Make a space for each child.** This can be a cubby, a place on a shelf or table, a hook, a chair. Include each child's name and perhaps a simple picture. (For children not yet able to recognize their names, the picture serves as a visual reminder.)
- **Hang attractive objects** from ceilings, walls and in windows. A piece of brightly coloured fabric or a clothes hanger with a selection of interesting objects hanging from it looks appealing.



- **Pot some non-toxic plants** and place them in a sunny area of your room. Chidren can help to care for the plants, making this a useful learning experience for everyone.
- Offer **playdough** as an optional activity. Most children enjoy working with playdough and will find the activity interesting and relaxing. The following is a simple recipe: Mix 3 cups flour and 1 cup salt (dry ingredients). Combine 1 tablespoon vegetable oil and 1 cup water (liquid ingredients). (If available, food colouring can be added to the liquid ingredients.) Mix dry and liquid ingredients. You

(Continued on page 3)

PS 026905

THE GROWING MIND

Infomation about brain development.

It's difficult not to be delighted by the remarkable physical developments that happen during the first few years of life. Amy, who last week could only sit, this week can crawl! Ben can now skip, when only a few short weeks ago he tripped and stumbled with the rope. There are so many changes and we notice that these generally follow a predictable pattern. For example, a child will sit, then crawl, then walk, then run.

Recent research has shown that children's brains are also growing and developing in recognizable patterns. This important information points out that, like other parts of the body, the brain requires the proper nourishment and stimulation for proper development.

Our bodies are made up of cells. At birth a child's brain contains 100 billion brain cells. These brain cells are not yet connected in networks the way they will be when the brain is mature. These networks are built and strengthened as the brain receives and sends electrical signals. Why are these networks so important? They allow thinking, learning and many other important functions to take place. What forms these networks? As children actively participate in their world, these networks are formed and strengthened. It's something like building a wide pitch road after first clearing a dirt path! By talking with children, by allowing children to explore and make decisions, by offering a wide range of hands-on experiences in a consistent and loving environment, we promote development of these vital brain networks. The fact is that by the time a child is five, the brain hits the peak of its activity. What we also know is that not all of the brain cell connections that are formed are maintained. When a connection is used over and over it becomes permanent. Those that are seldom or never used, the brain get rid of. This way the brain sorts out the thick tangle of networks that has been formed. This is very important information for those who work with and care for children. Research shows that for brain development it is a "use it or lose it" situation. For example, if a child seldom hears language (is seldom read to or spoken to) the connections for mastering language do not develop properly. Think of the effect on the child's later learning. It's the same for other connections.

The findings about brain function and development indicate more than ever just how important it is to provide a safe, consistent and stimulating environment in the first years of a child's life. For those of us charged with the care and education of children, it confirms just how important it is for us to provide a quality environment.

Article written by S. Tyrrell. Thank you to Beth Conant <http://www.nauticom.net/www/cokids> for permission to use information obtained from her article: "Learning What We've Learned". ECE Connection readers with Internet access are encouraged to visit Beth's excellent ECE related web site.

Salutations!

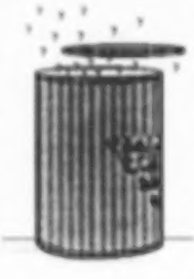
Greetings to **Sonia A. McQueen** of **St. Patrick's R.C. School.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of September 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

Win A "Walkman"

Members will have the opportunity to win a portable AM/FM radio cassette player in our upcoming membership drive! ECE Connection will be announcing details of this contest in next month's newsletter. Be sure you get your copy.

New Resources



Another shipment of resource material has arrived in Grenada. Several mini kits, some counting and sorting activities, a table top Fisher Price farm set and two table top Fisher Price play houses are now available.

A selection of carefully chosen children's story book titles and duplicates of teacher's resource books are also available on loan. A limited number of 'big books' have been included in this shipment. (Big books are the size of half a sheet of Bristol board. Their size makes it possible for teachers to read a story to a large group of children.)

More felt, Velcro and children's safety scissors are also included, as well as additional used children's books to be given to teachers willing to set up in-class book corners. Don't miss out on these resources!

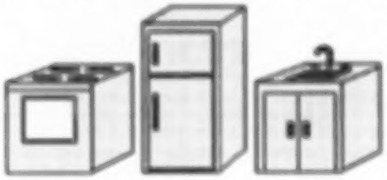
Those working with young children are encouraged to contact Mrs. Ivy Harris (440-3161) or Mrs. Keturah Benjamin (443-7338) to make arrangements to obtain resource material.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

We are still in search of a suitable site for ECE Connection's St. Andrew's resource library. If you have any suggestions as to where we could safely house kits and other resource material, please contact Mrs. Ivy Harris (440-3161) or leave a message at ECE Connection's number (444-0528).

("First Day Back," continued from page 1)

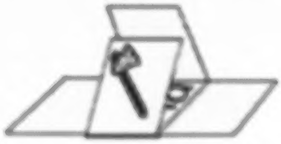
may have to adjust the amount of liquid, depending on the quality of your flour, so add your liquid ingredients gradually. Stir your ingredients until they are of a bread dough consistency. Knead until the dough is pliable and store in an airtight container in the fridge.



- **Create a "home centre".** A pretend fridge, stove and sink can be made out of sturdy cardboard boxes. These offer children something familiar to connect with at a time when they may be nervous and shy. Include some old pots, spoons, etc. to make the setting more interesting.
- **List each child's birthday** in an attractive display. (The star outline on page 4 can be used to make each child a star!)
- **Post information about your programme** for parents and guardians to see. (Your daily routine, your themes, classroom rules, etc.)

Remember, working in an attractive room affects you too. Take the time to add something appealing to your classroom. Put some flowers in your room or surprise a fellow teacher with flowers for her/his room. Your thoughtfulness will be appreciated.

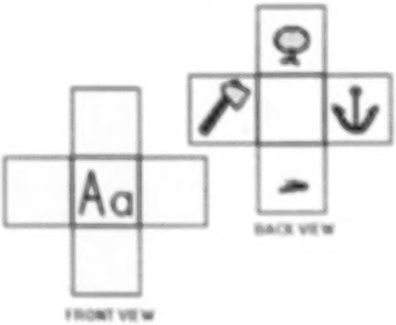
Fold-Out Book



Here's an idea that will provide children with a fun way to review concepts.

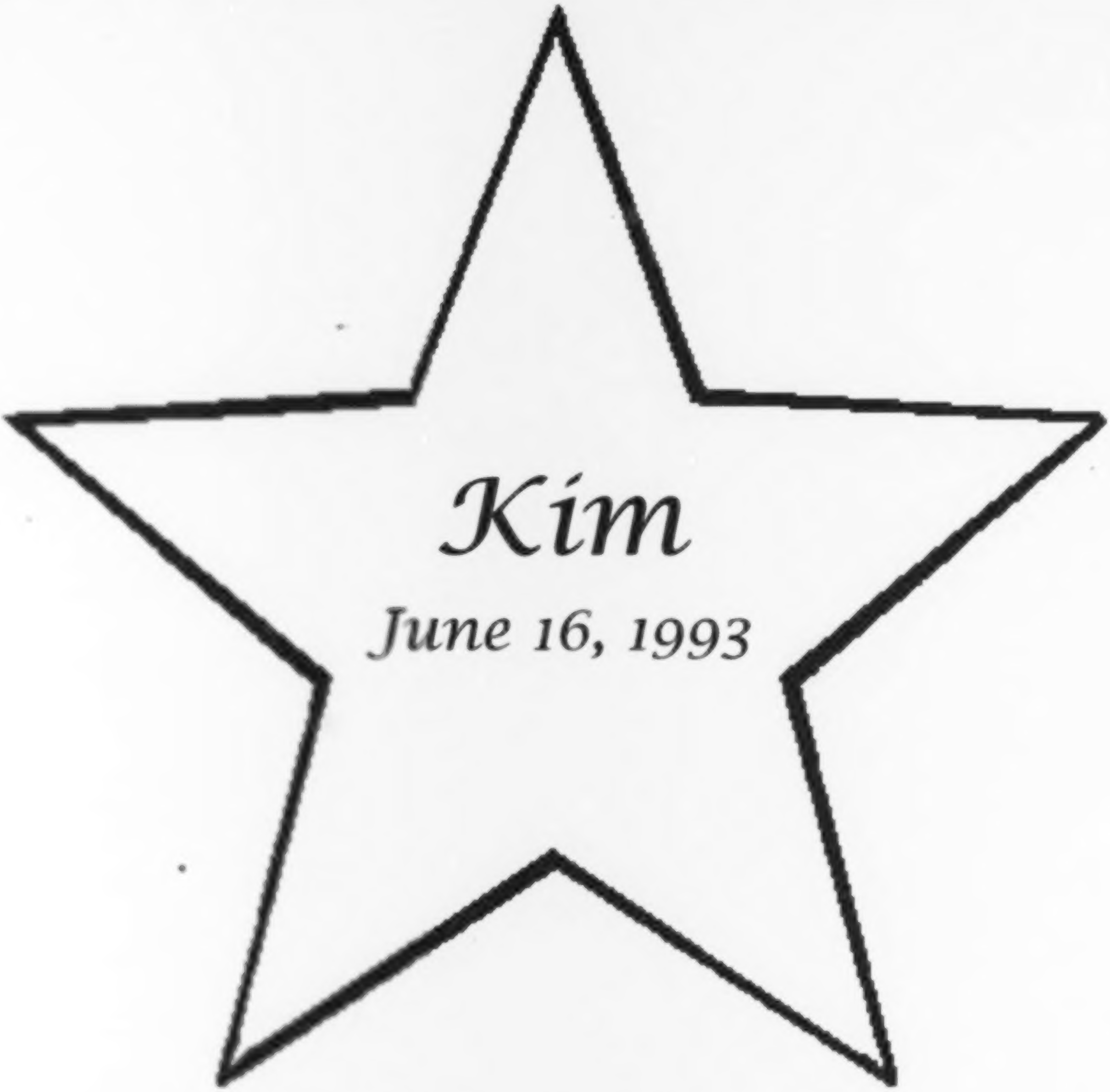
You'll need some stiff paper, a permanent marker and a source of simple pictures. (You can draw the pictures yourself or use pictures from magazines, greeting cards, etc.)

For every activity card you wish to make, cut out a paper "+" shape, as shown in the example below.



Mark the middle of the **front** of your paper with a letter, number, colour, or whatever you wish to feature. (The example above features the letter 'Aa'.) Fold the paper "flaps" in over the symbol in the centre front, as shown in the sketch at the top of this column. After each flap, add a picture to it. (After doing this you will have four examples of the symbol/concept you have chosen to feature on the **back** of your paper. (See example of the front and back view above. Apple, anchor, ant, and axe are shown in the back veiw.) The idea is that children unfold the flaps one at a time and then "discover" what has been featured in the middle of your paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



This star shape has been provided as an outline to assist you in making classroom resources and/or decorations. You may wish to copy the shape onto some cardboard to make a more lasting template. Here are a few suggestions for use with this shape:

- *Cut out one star for each child in your classroom and write in special details about each child on each star. (Example, This is Kim's star. Kim is four years old. Her favorite food is roti. Her favorite colour is pink. Kim wants to play steel pan and likes to help her granny cook.)*
- *Cut out a number of different coloured stars, print the name of the colour on each and suspend them from the ceiling of your room.*
- *Cut star shapes on plain paper and provide them for children to decorate. Talk about the star shape and where this or similar shapes might be found while the children are decorating their stars. Display the stars on your classroom.*

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 2 *October 1997*

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Nutrition & Learning

A piece of bread and cocoa tea for breakfast. At break a packet of sweet biscuits. A soft drink and a bag of processed cheese snacks for lunch, and on the way home a frozen "treat" consisting of sugar, and some coloured flavouring... This diet is similar to that of scores of Grenada's young children. Foods high in sugar, fat and salt have become a regular part of children's daily food intake.

There is deep concern about this trend, and rightly so. These "junk foods" contain few, if any, of the nutrients that build healthy minds and bodies.

The quantity and quality of food we eat directly affects our health and well-being. We need the right **amount** and the right **kind** of food.

Food provides our bodies with nutrients. These nutrients give us energy. Children's bodies also need nutrients for growth. (Adult bodies use nutrients more for repair and maintenance.) When children's bodies do not receive the right nutrients their ability to grow and learn is affected. Studies show that when children are hungry or eat foods that are low in nutritional value they score poorly on achievement tests. Studies also show that diets lacking in iron (found in foods such as meats, whole grain breads and cereals, raisins, prunes, passion fruit, sugar apples, callaloo and spinach) may cause shortened attention span, irritability, fatigue, poor concentration and permanent loss of IQ (intelligence quotient) later in life. (ERIC Digest, 1994)

Research also indicates that children whose diets are lacking in the proper nutrients or who are hungry are less able to fight infection and are more likely to become sick. This leads to

(Continued on page 3)

WIN A "WALKMAN"! ECE Connection's first membership contest gets under way this month. See page 3 for details.

PS 026905

CRITICAL THINKING

The **how** and the **why** of what goes on around us is part of children's natural curiosity. They spend endless hours exploring and experimenting. But this inborn need to know can be stifled by well meaning adults who discourage exploration and who demand that children always follow adult approved solutions to problems.

More than ever before it is necessary to cultivate problem solving and critical thinking in children. The following are five simple steps:

1. Help children to decide what the problem is. (Getting a ball out of a tree.)
2. Encourage children to come up with several possible solutions. (use a stick, get a ladder...)
3. Have children choose one of the solutions.
4. Let children try their solution, if it is safe to do so.
5. Afterwards, talk about what happened and whether it was successful. (It may be necessary to try another solution if the first one didn't work.)

Discussion during the whole process is vital. Ask questions and encourage children to verbalise their thoughts.

Reference: The Instant Curriculum by Pan Schiller & Joan Rossano, Gryphon House, Inc., Maryland, 1990.

HELP US FIND A HOME FOR OUR NEW KITS!

We are **still** looking for a suitable place to accommodate a St. Andrew's resource centre. The curriculum kits and other material that will be made available through this centre can be borrowed through the St. George's resource centre, but the distance that teachers and caregivers in the north must travel prevents many from borrowing the kits.

We need your suggestions for a suitable place to secure and distribute the kits. Contact Mrs. Ivy Harris (440-3161) or leave a message at ECE Connection's answering service (See information on right.).

Salutations!

Greetings to **Floretta Noel of Vendome R.C. School, St. George's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of October 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date, a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF ECE CONNECTION'S UPDATED ANSWERING SERVICE!

At last ECE Connection has a "proper" answering service. When you dial **444-0528**, and if no one is available to take your call, you will now hear a specially recorded message. Listen to the message, then wait for the "beep" sound, then leave your name and phone number. Someone will get back to you.

A Simple Memory Game

This game increases children's awareness of the members of their class, and offers a pleasant way to practice visual recognition skills. All you need is a large beach towel, sheet or table cloth and you're ready to play!

Have children sit in a circle so that they can see all members of their class. Tell them that you would like to play a game and that you will ask them to close their eyes for a short time while you cover one child with the towel. (Tell them that you will let them know when they can open their eyes.)

Once their eyes are closed, cover one child with the towel, then tell the children that they can open their eyes. Have them guess the name of the child hidden under the towel. Repeat the process giving each child a turn to "hide". Children who do not wish to close their eyes or who are uncomfortable being covered should be allowed to "watch".

This game was observed during a very successful large group "circle time". The children loved it. Thanks to Leah Washbourne for allowing us to "borrow" her idea!

("Nutrition & Learning," continued from page 1)

more days off school and increases their chances of falling behind in class. (ERIC Digest, 1994)

According to research the following are reasons for the increase in poor nutrition among children:

- *Poverty... the lack of money to buy enough food.*
- *Lack of knowledge about proper nutrition.*
- *Poor eating habits.*
- *Working parents leaving children to prepare their own food or purchase food from vendors.*
- *Increase in fast-food establishments and the messages children receive about food from television, food packaging and those around them.*

What can teachers do to help? Begin by educating yourself about good nutritional practices. (See contacts for information below.)

- *Educate parents about the importance of good nutrition for their children.*
- *Encourage parents to provide healthy foods for children's school snacks and lunches.*
- *Suggest suitable foods that parents can send to school.*
- *Set a good example by eating healthy foods yourself.*
- *Let children be part of in-class food preparation activities.*

You are encouraged to contact Mrs. Betty Findlay, Grenada Food & Nutrition Council at 440-2126 for additional information and resources.

References

Children's Nutrition & Learning. National Health/Education Consortium. ERIC Digest, June 1994. University of Illinois, 51 Gerty Drive, Champaign, IL 61820-7469.

Health, Safety & Nutrition for the Young Child. Lynn R. Marotz, Jeanettia M. Ruch, Marie Z. Cross. Delmar Publishers, Inc., Albany, New York, 1989.

Win A "Walkman"

ECE Connection (ECEC) will be holding a draw for an Optimus portable AM/FM radio cassette player **Monday, December. 1st, 1997.**

To encourage new members to join ECEC, and promote the use of kits and other resources, **every time** a member borrows a kit (or other item) her/his name will be entered on a list of eligible participants. On December 1st (1997) the names of all those on the list will be placed in a jar and one name will be drawn to win the "walkman".

Those wishing to participate will have the opportunity to have their names added to the list between Wednesday, October 1st and Friday, November 28th. The name of the winner will be announced in the January edition of your ECEC newsletter. For further details contact ECEC at 444-0528.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 3 *November 1997*

The Shy and Withdrawn Child

Each child is a unique combination of his or her parents (inherited characteristics) and the upbringing he is given (environmental influences). A child's temperament (how a child responds to everyday happenings) effects how others respond to that child. The shy child may cling to her parent, speak quietly (or not at all) and withdraw from classroom activities. As a result of these behaviours the child may then be teased, bullied, and forced to participate. There is often pain and unhappiness associated with shyness, but according to Steffen Saifer (1990) there are things adults can do to help. First of all, a reasonable level of shyness is to be expected in some children, it is just part of "normal differences". But for the child whose shyness causes problems with friendships and participation in activities, the following is suggested:

- Be patient and positive. Offer regular opportunities for participation, but do not force the child.
- Start an activity with the child and later, when the child seems to feel comfortable, invite others to join in.
- Encourage a less shy child to include the shy child in his/her play. (Shy children usually find play that involves only two children less stressful.)
- Gently teach the child the words and actions needed to interact with others. (Not understanding how to join-in and play with others may be part of the child's difficulty.)
- Look for opportunities to include the child in small group activities. Even if the child is just an onlooker s/he can be made to feel appreciated.
- Comment positively when the child does make efforts to participate.
- Provide a number of different ways that the child can participate.
- Gently limit the amount of time the child can play alone at quiet activities. Let him know that others need to have a turn to use the puzzles, books, or other items with which the child is playing alone.
- If a child has a very quiet voice encourage her by letting her know that you love to hear her "big five year old voice".

Above all be patient. A teacher's understanding and support can go a long way in easing some of the distress that can be associated with shyness.

Article written by S. Tyrrell
Reference: Saifer, Steffen. Practical Solutions to Practically Every Problem. Red Leaf Press, Minnesota. 1990

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ECE Connection is a monthly newsletter published to offer information and support to those who work with young children. Service also includes a teacher resource libraries containing books, educational games/activities and curriculum kits. These items are on loan free of charge but require users to hold an ECE Connection ID card.

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PS 026905

Five Little Sea Shells

FIVE little sea shells lying on the shore,
Woooosh went a big wave and then there were FOUR.

FOUR little sea shells resting by the sea,
Woooosh went a big wave and then there were THREE.

THREE little sea shells by the ocean blue,
Woooosh went a big wave and then there were TWO.

TWO little sea shells, basking in the sun,
Woooosh went a big wave and then there was ONE.

ONE little sea shell not having any fun
Woooosh went a big wave and then there were NONE.

Author Unknown

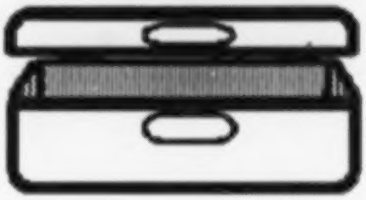
If possible, bring in five shells to show the children. Talk about the shells. Allow children to perform the rhyme as it is chanted, using the shells. This rhyme can also be performed with very young children using their fingers to represent the shells. Sit the child on your lap. As you say the rhyme, gently fold the child's fingers down toward the palm. With older children you may want to encourage them to perform the finger actions themselves. Another way of is to let five children pretend to be shells lying on the shore. As you say the rhyme one child leaves the group until no one is left.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Carla Steele-John of ECE Department, Ministry of Education, St. George's**. *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of November 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your place of work.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible. Be sure to check next month's issue to see whose name has been drawn. It could be you!

Curriculum Resources



We would like to remind members that ECE Connection now offers the following kits designed especially for toddlers:

Things That Go!
Magnificent Me!
Dinner's Ready!
Board Books (# 1)
Board Books (# 2)

These kits contain a selection of hands-on items that can be safely used by very young children.

The following new kits (including full-size and and mini kits) are now available for preschoolers:

Travel
Plants & Trees
Dinosaurs
More Fine Motor
Ten Trolls
Farm Animals
A Train Set

In addition, a number of individual resource items, including children's story books and blocks, are available on loan. Call and make arrangements to drop by your resource centre to see what's new.

St George's	**440-3161**
Carriacou	**443-7338**

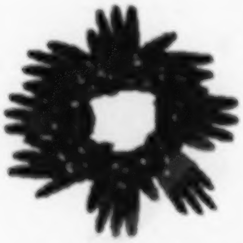
HOLIDAY SEASON ACTIVITIES

Advanced planning makes all the difference!

The following are some suggestions for seasonal programming:

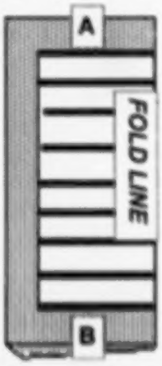
Hand Print Wreath

Using green construction paper, draw an outline of each child's hand. Cut out each outline and attach it to a cardboard circle with a hole cut in the centre, as shown below. Coloured paper scraps, glitter, or small balls made of tin foil can be used to decorate the wreath. You may wish to print each child's name on his/her hand outline and/or write what each child says about the holiday season on individual hand prints. (For example, "Verna likes the pretty tree lights.")



Holiday Lanterns

For each lantern, you will need a piece of sturdy rectangular shaped paper. Fold the paper in half along the its length. Cut slits in the paper along the folded edge, leaving a 1" border around the "open" edges as illustrated in the shaded area in the diagram to the right. (Slits shown in thicker black lines.) Open out the paper and tape or glue edges A and B together to make a lantern, as shown above right. A piece of yarn or ribbon can be used to make a handle for each lantern. Lanterns can be made more attractive if children are encouraged to decorate the paper before it is folded and cut. Hang the lanterns on a branch or tree in the classroom.



Pomanders

For each of these scented ornaments you will need a small orange, lemon, or lime. You will also need a nail, a quantity of cloves, a paper bag, and some ribbon. Pierce holes all over the fruit with the nail. Stick cloves into the holes. Place each fruit in the bag and dry the fruit until it becomes hard. (This takes a few weeks.) Tie ribbon around the fruit as shown above. It may be easier to attach the ribbon to the fruit if two bands of tape are placed around the fruit where the ribbon will be tied and no cloves are placed in the taped area. In addition, ground cinnamon and nutmeg can be added to the bag in which the fruit is dried. The finished pomander can be hung in a room or on a tree and gives a pleasing scent.

Rights of the Child

Did you know that on November 5th, 1990 Grenada ratified (formally agreed to accept) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child? This means that Grenada's government has agreed to make sure that every child is given all the rights stated in the Convention. These rights are listed in the "articles" of the Convention. There are 54 articles in all. In upcoming newsletters ECE Connection will be discussing some of these articles.

Seasonal Resources

For the holiday season ECE Connection has provided a limited supply of glitter and other craft material to enhance your program activities. Please contact your ECE Connection resource centre for further information. (A nominal donation toward costs is appreciated.)

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 4 *December 1997*

ECE CONNECTION IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED TO OFFER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. SERVICE ALSO INCLUDES TEACHER RESOURCE LIBRARIES CONTAINING BOOKS, EDUCATIONAL GAMES/ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM KITS. THESE ITEMS ARE ON LOAN FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE USERS TO HOLD AN ECE CONNECTION ID CARD.

READERS' COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. WRITE:

ECE CONNECTION
P.O. BOX 187
ST. GEORGE'S
GRENADA

FAX OR PHONE MESSAGES:

444-0528

WWW.SPICEISLE.COM/ECE

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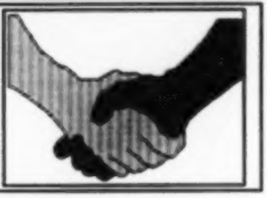
Winner of the draw for the "walkman" to be announced in the Jan. '98 newsletter!

Getting Parents Involved



Studies show that a good partnership between parent and teacher increases a child's chances of success in school. But a good partnership takes time and effort, and things do not always run smoothly. A common concern for teachers is that some parents seem to show little or no interest in their child's education. This article focuses on parents who seldom or never participate in their child's schooling.

There's an old saying, "One can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." Often when parents are hard to "catch" it becomes necessary to "sweeten the pot". Start by trying to find the reasons that parents are not involved. A phone call, or perhaps a visit to a parent who is difficult to contact may be needed. It may even be necessary to get help from a respected member of the community. S/he can offer advice or even accompany you when you make your visit. Be sure to show respect, and keep matters involving a parent and/or their child private. It is important that parents grow to trust you and feel that you are acting in their child's best interest.

Another way to "catch" parents is to involve their children or their children's work in your parent-teacher get-togethers. A short recital, a display of art work, or an open house that invites parents to tour the class and see what their children have been doing may stimulate interest. Some teachers find it helpful to let parents experience a part of their children's day. (I recall sitting on a small chair in my daughter's class, listening to her teacher read a children's story. Afterwards she discussed how listening to stories helped to increase children's attention spans, developed listening and comprehension skills and fostered a love of books.) Remember to keep your meetings short and informative, and to give parents advanced notice and a reminder for all your get-togethers. Parents should leave meetings feeling that their time was well spent. For parents who do make the effort to attend there is nothing worse that listening to a lecture about a lack of participation. Thank parents for their attendance and let them know that you appreciate their support.

Continued on page 2

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Rights of the Child

On November 20th, 1989 the United Nations adopted a set of standards as basic guidelines for the care and protection of the World's children. This document is known as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (abbreviated to the Convention). These standards spell out the basic rights that should be in place for the survival, development, protection, and participation in every day life of all children. A great deal of thought and work of people from all over the world went into that document.

Most countries have laws relating to children's welfare and protection. However, **many** countries do not live up to their own minimum standards. Children suffer from poverty, homelessness, abuse, neglect, preventable diseases, unequal access to education, and justice systems do not recognise their special needs. The Convention says that a basic quality of life should be available to ALL children - not just a few.

Our own country, Grenada, signed the Convention and agreed to be guided by its principles on May 11th, 1990.

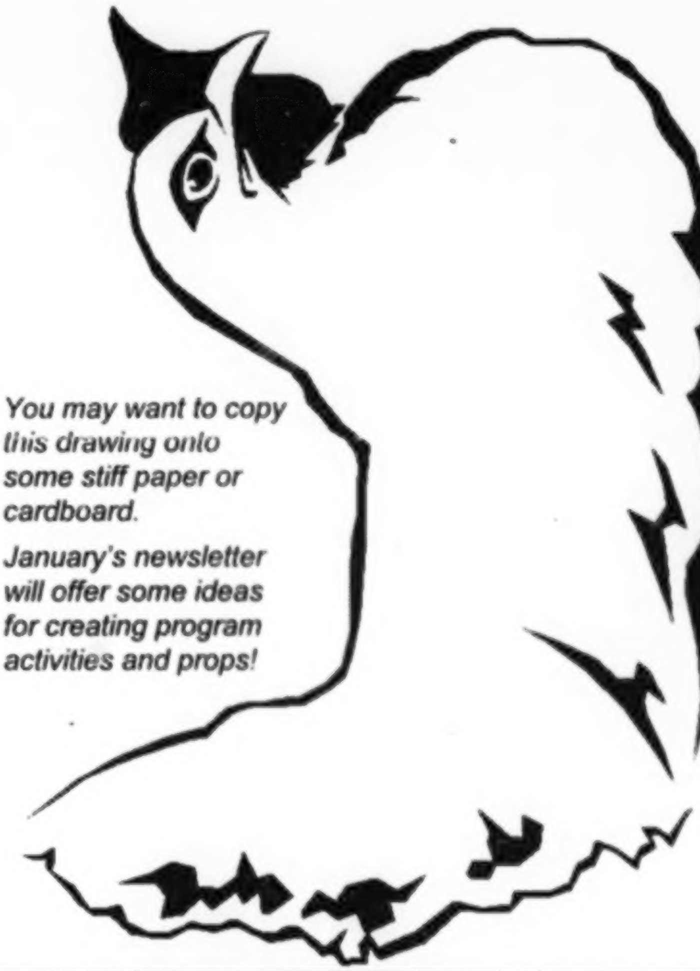
Once a country is in agreement with the principles of the Convention it then has to take the steps to review national practices affecting its children. The United Nations does not blindly accept that once a nation has signed up **everything** will automatically fall into place for its children. They require proof that a Government is doing what it agreed to do. There are reports to be made to a special Committee in the UN and inspections and the usual verification procedures involved in any international agreement.

Grenada agrees that its children must get the best possible chance for their development and growth.

In Grenada the Government is assisted in its efforts to meet the standards of the Convention by a group (put in place by a Cabinet decision) called THE COALITION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

Look out for your January newsletter to find out more about the Coalition and the Rights of the Child. The information above was quoted from a Coalition document.

This chicken can be added to your drawing outline files:



You may want to copy this drawing onto some stiff paper or cardboard.

January's newsletter will offer some ideas for creating program activities and props!

Getting Parents Involved (Continued from page 1)

Additional suggestions include having an interesting speaker attend your meetings. Issues that all parents struggle with (for example, discipline, health concerns, stress) can be discussed. If possible, serve light refreshments. (You may even wish to involve the children in the preparation of these items. "Parents, this lime juice was made earlier today by your sons and daughters.")

Above all do not give-up on those parents that show little interest. Keep them informed of what is happening in your class through short written notes and phone calls. "Good afternoon Mrs. Ali, it's Miss. Noel. I'm calling because I wanted you to know that Mark is doing a good job with his letters. Yes, he is **really** doing well! I'm also seeing some improvement in his social skills." This type of positive contact is important as it opens lines of communication and builds a relationship between parent and teacher.

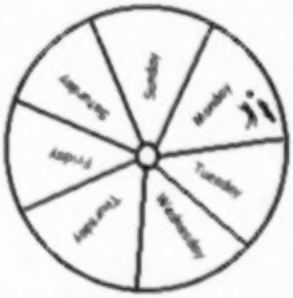
It is important to remember that despite frustration and disappointment, our efforts do touch parents and do make a difference. Children benefit from positive parent involvement so we need to persevere.

S. Tyrrell

Program Ideas For the New Year

Time does not mean very much to young children. Yesterday, today, tomorrow, one week, one hour... adults usually have to translate these references to time into something a young child can understand: *"It will be Christmas day after three more sleeps." "When the big hand (on the clock) gets to the twelve, right here, we will go to the airport to get Uncle Tim and Aunt Kim." "We have to go outside for break, then come in and sing some songs, THEN mummy will be here."*

Many teachers do calendar work to help familiarise children with the passage of time. Children can memorise and recite the year, month, day-of-the-week, etc., but teachers can bring more meaning to these rituals by providing visual prompts/reminders. The days of the week and months of the year can be represented by a *pie chart*. (See example of a days-of-the week chart below left.) Add drawings/pictures to the words to help children identify with the different days or months. For example, if you have Physical Education (PE) every Monday, you could indicate this with a sketch of something related to your PE program. The silhouette of two children playing ball (shown right) is one example.



At this time of year many businesses offer free calendars to patrons. Bring a calendar into your classroom and discuss its use with the children in your class. Point out the numerals, and words, and mark down important dates... upcoming birthdays and national holidays help to signify the passage of time for young children. *"How many days until Astrid's birthday?" "It's getting closer and closer!"*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

You may also wish to make a numeral line. This can be done by taping/gluing together strips of paper to make a long narrow piece of paper. Write the numerals representing the days of the month on the paper. Weekends and days when the children will not be in school can be marked in a different colour or highlighted. Each day, have one child cross off the numeral representing "yesterday". Comment on how many days have passed and how many days there are left.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Rosie DeGale** of **Hermitage Government School St. Patrick's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of December 1997.) Should we hear from you by this date, a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible. Be sure to check next month's issue to see whose name has been drawn. It could be you!

Editor's Thoughts

The holiday season means different things to different people. As a child it meant magic and excitement. I believed in Santa Claus... he could do impossible things and left presents at the end of my bed. I stopped believing in him when I could no longer ignore the fact that he never came to the children that needed him the most. Children for whom every day was a struggle, and who were far too familiar with pain and emptiness.

More recently I've started to believe in Santa again. I see him in the faces of the teachers who nurture children in their care. I see him in the efforts of those who work wonders with the barest minimum of resources. And I feel the magic again.

To those who learn and grow with children, who work tirelessly to give each child the best possible start in life, I say thank you. Your work is often overlooked and your position is always undervalued. But please know that you are the Santas. You are the ones who can make magic for a child and your efforts on behalf of children are appreciated. You help children to believe in themselves... one of the greatest gifts of all.

The members of ECE Connection's team join me in wishing you and yours a safe and relaxing holiday season. Peace, joy and friendship.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 5 *January 1998*

TEACHER TO TEACHER

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

On a daily basis teachers and caregivers are called upon to be creative, to be inspiring, to solve problems. We know that children's learning is improved when our programmes include activities and props that stimulate and hold their interest. But where can we get new and different ideas? ECE Connection's resource centres can help. Another good source of information can be found in fellow teachers. Sharing is a way of building a sense of togetherness. It also provides an opportunity to learn and grow. The following are a few suggestions obtained from others who work with young children. We hope that after reading these ideas you will be inspired to share some of your ideas. Write to us with your suggestions and we will compile a list of "teacher tested" tips for publication in an upcoming newsletter.

Teacher's Suggestions

Create a personal "bag of tricks". This could contain a few favourite children's story books, a puppet, a pack of playing cards, crayons and paper. The items you include should help you to hold children's interest at times when unforeseen circumstances arise.

Set up a storage area for yourself for the collection of items and materials that you use in your program. For example, one teacher used a cardboard barrel as her container and collected things such as old greeting cards, pieces of fabric, bottle tops, shells. These were kept in labelled ice-cream tubs and shoe boxes. She even wrote a list of what was in the barrel on the outside. She let others know that she was collecting certain items and within a few months she had half a barrel of "beautiful junk."

Tie a pen or pencil to a clipboard (or a piece of stiff cardboard with a fastener to hold the paper in place). Use this to record your observations and thoughts about the children in your class. (Example, Jan./15 - Jared complained of feeling tired when asked to do a drawing. Jan./17 - Jared says he lost his crayons so can't draw.) These sort of notes can help to point out patterns in children's behaviour and can be used to help you find ways to make your classroom a more effective place for learning. (Remember, your notes are confidential and should be kept in a safe place.)

Practice listening and looking out for "teachable moments". These are times when children are curious and ready to learn. For example, you pass out some small pieces of fabric and coloured paper for a sorting activity. One child chooses three yellow pieces of cloth and notices that they are different kinds of yellow. Use this opportunity to discuss different **shades** of a particular colour. "Yes, this one seems darker and this is lighter, but they are all yellow."

Thank you to those who contributed ideas for this article. We look forward to hearing from others.

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PS 026905

Remember the Chicken?

From time to time ECE Connection's newsletters include a simple drawing or outline. Last month you found an outline of a hen. Chickens are familiar to most children and when we use familiar figures to create games and activities we help children to identify with the material. Upon seeing the hen little Carl might say, *"That a fowl! My granny have fowl!"* You've captured his interest and can build on the knowledge he already has. Encourage conversation as this build vocabulary, *"Your **grandmother** keeps **chickens** Carl! Tell me about her **chickens**."* Carl has now heard different terms for his words ***granny*** and ***fowl*** and has been encouraged to put more of his thoughts into words. This is how he learns about language.

The hen outline can add to the decoration in your classroom. You may wish to make each hen in a different colour or make two hens in the same colour for a match-up game. Perhaps you can create a hen and egg matching game. Discuss the colours of "real" hens. Take a walk to see if you can see any chickens. Your hen and egg colour-matching game can be brought to life by showing the children the colour of real eggs and how they are dyed with food colouring. By gluing materials with different textures (fabric, sand, etc.) to hen outlines you offer the chance for sensory exploration. You may even want to create a texture matching game.

Hens can also be used to reinforce number and numeral concepts. Draw a number of hens and write a different numeral on each hen's body. (An example is shown at the top of the page.) Provide a number of egg-shaped pieces of cardboard and let the children put the matching number of eggs under the chicken. For older children you might want to use different coloured eggs to represent simple mathematical equations, as shown right.

No doubt you've come up with your own ideas of how to use the chicken outline. We would be glad to share your ideas with others. Write to use with your suggestions. Our address is on the front page of this newsletter.

Win a "Walkman" Draw Winner!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROSLYN SMITH (ID CARD NO. 125) OF TISHA'S PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL, ST. GEORGE'S, WINNER OF ECE CONNECTION'S DRAW!

In the October 1997 edition of ECE Connection's newsletter we announced the start of a promotion to build our membership and encourage the use of ECE Connection's kits and other resources. Between October 1st and November 28th, every time a member borrowed a kit or related resource s/he was entitled to a ballot for the draw. Ballots were prepared and the name of the winner of the draw was chosen on December 1st. The prize includes a portable Optimus radio cassette player with two sets of batteries and four pre-recorded cassette tapes. Roslyn Smith was notified that she had won the prize and will be presented with the "walkman" at her school on Wednesday, January 21, at 9:00 a.m.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Margaret Wilson** of **Birchgrove R. C. School, St. Andrew's.** *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of January 1998.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

A continuation of information provided in the Dec. '97 newsletter.

Rights of the Child

Grenada's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is assisted by the Coalition on the Rights of the Child...

The Coalition, who meets regularly, is an umbrella body of representatives from seven (7) Government departments and thirteen (13) other agencies all involved with children and their care.

They do so to pool their observations and findings as to the needs of the nation's children as set out in the Convention and then to discuss actions for improvement of conditions where necessary.

Laws relating to children are reviewed and the services provided for children in the country are examined. Representation is made to Government and the people of the country in all areas where there needs to be improvement.

The tightening of Adoption Practices is an example of one action taken to improve a risky situation for children. The programme for Adolescent Mothers at Heritage in Mt. Parnassus is another action supported by the Coalition to provide an opportunity for school age young women to complete their education when it has been interrupted by pregnancy and the arrival of a baby. Lobbying for legislation to protect children at risk has been on the agenda of the Coalition since its inception.

A major part of the Coalition's work is to inform and involve the public so all citizens are involved in the process of necessary change to promote and protect children's rights. It is important to understand that the International Convention and the local Coalition both strictly emphasise that both parents of a child have the responsibility for the care and nurture of that child. The document lays this out in no uncertain terms. The parents' role is well respected - actually the crucial element - in the successful upbringing of the nation's children. The Government's focus is to be on the rights of the child and the plans, policies and programmes needed to see these rights are not infringed upon. The Coalition's role is to question and encourage policy makers and appeal for actions in all matters that will improve the conditions of children.

After listening to the basic ideas promoted by the Convention you will realise that Grenada meets the standards in many ways. There is however need for some systems, laws and cultural practices to improve. The cooperative efforts of parents, Government, Coalition and caring citizens will be required to achieve this.

This information is quoted from a document provided by the Coalition. Next month's newsletter will include a Coalition summary of the Convention.

From Carla Steele John...

Regarding the participation of government employed pre primary school teachers in a research project.

I wish to express my profound gratitude and thanks to all the pre primary school teachers who participated in a study of teacher involvement in curriculum development in our country. A report of the findings from this study will be made available to teachers. I look forward to continuing working with you as we go ahead upgrading early childhood care and education for the children of our nation.

Carla Steele John

Upcoming Workshops and In-Class Activities

Plans are being made to offer a limited selection of teacher workshops and in-class activities in March (1998). Those interested in finding out more about these events are asked to contact their closest resource centre.

E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 6 *February 1998*

Children's Misbehaviour

Although most adults would prefer it if children never misbehaved, all children do. In fact occasional misbehaviour is a perfectly normal part of a child's development... a part of growing and learning. In examining misbehaviour we note that children generally misbehave **by accident** or **on purpose**. For example, accidental misbehaviour happens when a child throws a stone to knock down a mango and hits and injures another child. An example of misbehaviour done on purpose (intentional misbehaviour) might be if a child stole money from an adult after being told that s/he could not have money to buy sweets at school.

There are many **reasons** for misbehaviour, sometimes the reasons are easy to see, at other times they are hidden. According to the CMHA (see reference) reasons may include the following:

- Impulsiveness and inexperience.
- Resentment and anger at rules.
- Resentment and anger at unfair treatment.
- Frustration from too much pressure to perform.
- Fears, real or imagined.

It is important to try to understand **why** a child has misbehaved. When we know the reason(s) behind misbehaviour we are better able to help that child to learn to control his/her own behaviour. Our goal must be to help children develop self control.

How we set-up our classrooms and the way we interact with children makes a big difference. In many cases difficult behaviour can be prevented. The following methods can help:

- Let children know ahead of time what behaviour is expected. Discuss what **can** be done.
- Remind children of the rules and the reason(s) for those rules. Too many rules can be overwhelming for young children. In addition, rules should be developed so that children can understand the reason for the rules. "Walk on the stairs to avoid falling and hurting yourself or

(Continued on page 2)

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PS 026905

Rights of the Child

A continuation of information featured in the December '97 & January '98 newsletter

In ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child the Government of Grenada has agreed to make sure that every child has all the rights of the Convention. There are 17 pages to the original Convention, these can be summarised as follows:

1. *All children, without regard to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status, are entitled to the Rights set out in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.*
2. *The child shall enjoy special protection and be given opportunities and facilities to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially.*
3. *The child shall be entitled to a name and nationality.*
4. *The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreational and medical services.*
5. *The child who is physically, mentally, or socially handicapped shall be given special treatment, education and care.*
6. *Wherever possible the child should grow up with its parents. Society and public authorities have the duty to extend special care to children without family means of support.*
7. *The child is entitled to free and compulsory education. The child shall have the opportunity for play and recreation.*
8. *The child shall always be among the first to be given protection and relief.*
9. *The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation. Child labour shall not be allowed.*
10. *The child shall be protected from practices which foster discrimination in any form. The child shall be brought up in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.*

The summary of the Convention (in italics above) was obtained from a Coalition document. ECE Connection wishes to thank the Coalition for providing information about Grenada's involvement in and responsibility for children.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Paulina Simon of Mt. Pleasant Government School, Carriacou.** *ECE Connection* is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of February 1998.) Should we hear from you by this date a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

Continued from page 1

others.)

- Offer reasonable consequences for misbehaviour. For example, if a child is unable to sit and colour safely with his friends he could be asked to colour by himself until he feels he can safely join the group. Harsh punishment often builds resentment and often teaches the child to avoid being 'caught'.

- Teach children how to interact with one another. Often children are not aware of the unwritten rules of social behaviour. Adults can actively teach social skills. For example, "Lester you need to ask Adin for a turn with the car. When you grab it Adin gets upset."
- Help children to come up with their own solutions to problems. Encourage them to think of ways to work things out.

In dealing with children's misbehaviour it is best for adults to be as calm and patient possible. Try to keep in mind the reasons behind the misbehaviour. Concentrate on helping children to develop effective ways of handling problems and developing self control.

Article written by S. Tyrrell.

References:
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) pamphlet: *Children & Difficult Behaviour*, 1993.
Saifer, Steffen. *Practical Solutions to Practically Every Problem*. Minnesota, Red Leaf Press. 1990.

"My Country" Theme Suggestions

At this time of year many teachers and caregivers may be looking out for new program ideas to include in their "My Country" (Ministry of Education) theme. If you have a suggestion for something new or different we encourage you to share it with others. The following suggestions have been provided for this purpose:

Make a weather chart. Create a set of weather symbols that can be attached to a calendar or wall chart. (You may wish to use the symbols included on the right to assist you.) Set aside some time each day to discuss the weather. "Yesterday the sun shone and it was very windy. Today the sun is out but there is no breeze." A weather chart encourages children to take note of changes in their environment.

Plan a class trip. This need not be far. A simple walk can reveal many interesting things. Use the out-of-class experience to build language skills. Describe what is seen and let the children discuss their experiences. "What an enormous tree! I wonder what sort of tree that is?" Safety is your top priority when planning any out-of-class event. Remember to make sure that there is adequate adult supervision and that children know what to expect and what is expected of them.

Make a spicy "sniff" game. Using small plastic containers with lids, place a small amount of a different spice in each. (Nutmeg, ginger, cloves...) Place a bit of cotton wool over each spice so that the children cannot see the spice when they open the lid. Place examples of the spices nearby so that the children can match the scent in the container to the actual spice.

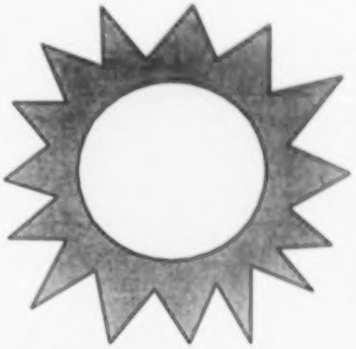
Local Picture Puzzles. Paste colourful local scenes (found in tourist brochures and magazines) onto stiff cardboard. Cut them into puzzle pieces. Have the children assemble the puzzles. Encourage discussion about the pictures.

Ask children to bring in local items that can be shared. Your enthusiasm helps children to take an interest in their community and discover the rich variety that makes up their island home.

In-Class Activities & Workshops

In March ECE Connection will facilitate a limited number of in-class activities and teacher workshops. Those interested in hosting a workshop and/or finding out further details about the in-class activities are asked to phone their resource centre:
St. George's: 440-3161, Carriacou: 443-7338.

Weather Symbols



E.C.E. Connection

Volume 4 - Issue 7 *March/April 1998*

ECE CONNECTION IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED TO OFFER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. SERVICES ALSO INCLUDE TEACHER RESOURCE LIBRARIES CONTAINING BOOKS, EDUCATIONAL GAMES/ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM KITS. THESE ITEMS ARE ON LOAN, FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE USERS TO HOLD AN ECE CONNECTION ID CARD.

READERS' COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. WRITE:

ECE CONNECTION
P.O. BOX 187
ST. GEORGE'S
GRENADA

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444-0528
WWW.SPICEISLE.COM/ECE

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PS 026905

Pre-Reading

Important First Steps

This article is about reading but begins by having a look at speaking. The reason for this is that a child's ability to understand and use oral language (speech) relates directly to his/her later success in reading (and writing).

Most of us don't remember learning to speak. We were not taught to talk, but learned language as a result of interactions with the important people in our lives. When we made attempts to talk (*"Da, da, da..."*) we were rewarded by their reactions. (*"Oh my, she said Daddy!"*) We were surrounded by lots and lots of examples of language in context (words associated with the things they describe) and our skills steadily improved.

Although we have created a formal process for teaching children to read, there are many important pre-reading skills that must be in place before we "learn to read". In fact learning to read happens in much the same way as learning to talk. Just as we learn to speak by being surrounded by the spoken word (in context), we learn to read by being surrounded by examples of written language - books, labels, lists, magazines, menus, newspapers, signs, etc.. In this way we become familiar with important "rules" of the reading process.

What is reading? This question may seem obvious but it is important to remind ourselves of the fact that reading is all about **getting meaning from print.** The reading process can be compared to breaking a code, and there are lots of little "rules" that need to be fully understood before we are able to get meaning from the written symbols. Have a look at the message below.

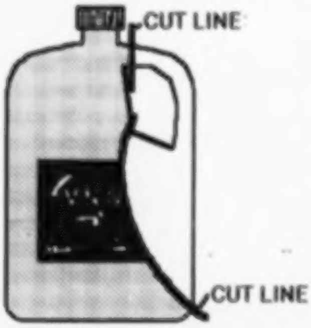
⇦⇨⇦◢ ◀⇨↗⇨▽ ⇨ ⇦↕◀◀↙⇨

Do you have any idea what it says? You probably don't, but you may recognize several of the rules you use for reading English. Take for example the fact that you read from left to right. Your experienced eyes are trained to easily follow from

(Continued on page 4)

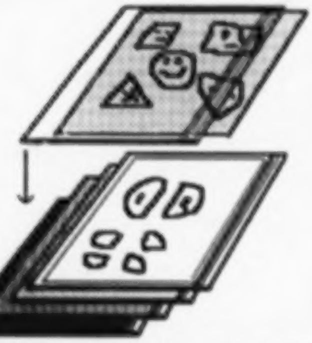
Resources From "Junk"

Classroom resources can be made out of ordinary household material and recyclable material (junk). The following are examples of a few of these "creations":

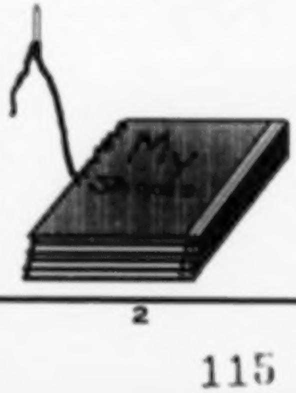


A simple shovel can be cut from a large plastic bottle. The bottle needs to have a built-in handle, as shown left. (This serves as the handle of the shovel.) Using a sharp knife or scissors, cut away a portion of the bottle as shown in the sketch on the left. Trim any rough edges for safety. The shovel can be used in sand and water play.

A ball toss game can be created by cutting away the bottom half of a large bleach bottle. The bottle must have a built-in handle, as shown in the sketch on the right. The same ball toss receptacle also makes a handy megaphone (A device for amplifying one's voice.). Speak with your lips touching the mouth of the bottle and hear how much louder you sound! This can be used for play by the children or even by adults during outdoor events.



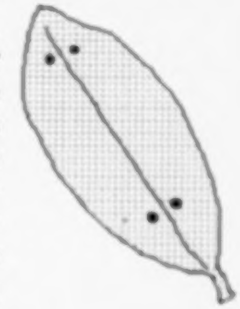
Re-sealable (Ziploc) plastic bags make simple books for very young children. Each book is made by stitching together several bags. The bags each contain a piece of cardboard that is cut to fit snugly inside. These become the pages of your book. You can design the pages to contain pictures, words and pictures, or a simple story and pictures. (Old magazines and greeting cards make great illustrations when cut out and glued onto the cardboard.) Place the bags (with the cardboard inside) in a pile, as shown above left. Using a needle and some string, stitch through the pile of bags, as shown right. The stitching is the spine of your book. By leaving the re-sealable end free, pages can be changed by simply replacing the cardboard inside. Even very young children can enjoy these simple books.



Easter Ideas

As Easter is kite season, you may wish to make arrangements for someone to come in and demonstrate how a flex kite is made. As this involves a lot of "looking" it is an actvity best suited to older children. Be sure to provide lots of opportunity for discussion both during and after the kite is made. Perhaps the kite can be flown later on, once the glue has dried.

For those who are able to get a supply of cocoa leaves, cloth strips, and string, you may want to let your class make cocoa leaf kites. This is a more hands on activity but will involve adult assistance. Pierce four holes in the the leaf as shown right. Attach a short piece of string through the holes at the stem end and do the same for the holes at the opposite end. The string at the stem end is for the kite string. The string at the opposite end is for attaching the cloth to make the tail, as is shown left. Trim off the pointed part of the leaf at both ends. Now your kite is ready to fly!



You Asked...

A new feature of ECE Connection's newsletter in which readers can write in with their early childhood related concerns and receive suggestions and support from others in the field.

QUESTION

B. E. writes that two children in her pre-school misbehave on a very frequent basis posing a serious challenge for their teacher. "As soon as (the children) are set free from (the consequence of their inappropriate behaviour) within seconds they misbehave again."

REPLY

Thank you for your question. Your situation is one that challenges all teachers. To begin with, try to remember that all behaviour tells us something. Take some time to sit and watch how the child in question interacts with others. Do this on several occasions, at different times during the day, and on different days. Do you notice any patterns to the child's behaviour? (For example, does s/he misbehave more during certain times of the day, or perhaps when s/he is with certain children or doing certain things?) What happens directly before the troublesome behaviour? When is behaviour at its worst? When is it not as bad? What do you think the child in question is feeling? Does s/he understand how others are feeling? Try to discover the answer to these questions. This will guide you in helping the child to behave in an acceptable way. You may need to show her/him how to behave. Things like sitting next to someone without hurting them or waiting for a turn can be very difficult for some children. They may need direct instruction as to how to behave. This can be done in a firm but gentle manner. ("Your hitting hurts Amal, you need to touch him gently, like this.")

Children who constantly misbehave often get some reward for their troublesome behaviour, even if it is just the attention of the adult who is disciplining them. Instead, try to offer more of your attention when they ARE behaving in an acceptable manner. Help the child to understand the reason you find her/his behaviour unacceptable and provide a reasonable and meaningful consequence for unacceptable behaviour. Avoid long lectures and be consistent.

As this is a complex problem, requiring great time and effort on the part of the adults involved, ECE Connection has made arrangements for B. E. to receive a copy of the book Guidance of Young Children by Marian Marion. We greatly appreciate hearing from our readers and believe that through sharing we all learn and help each other.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Aliceson P. Andrews of Pole's Pre-Primary School, Callsite, St. George's**. ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be post marked before the end of April 1998.) Should we hear from you by this date, a bag of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible.

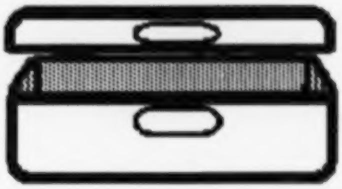
Editor's Note

This edition of ECE Connection's newsletter is a combined issue. We resume monthly publication with the May edition.

ECE Connection wishes to apologize to those who requested in-class activities (as advertised in February's newsletter) but were not able to host these services. Due to limited time constraints we only were able to visit a few schools.

The demand for these services has demonstrated that we must plan for more. We will be looking into this matter and hope to update you on our findings in the near future.

ECE Connection Resources



Curriculum kits, games, children's books and teacher resource books - the resources available through ECE Connection are growing and are available to members free of charge. All you need is a membership card (available upon request) and the means to collect and return the items you borrow.

In examining the records indicating which kits (and other material) are most popular we are delighted to note that some members frequently borrow kits. We would like to see more members using our services and encourage everyone to have a look at the material that is available.

In order to support your work with children we would appreciate hearing from you. Tell us what you find useful and helpful so that we can provide additional services. Tell us what you would like to see changed or improved. Although we must work under logistical and budgetary constraints the information you provide helps us to better support your work with children.

("Pre-Reading" continued from page 1)

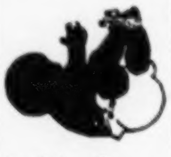
left to right. This is not so for beginning readers. See how much more challenging it is to read the following sentence that is written from the right to the left:

.tfel ot thgir morf daer t'nod eW

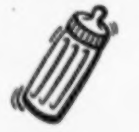
As an experienced reader you are also aware that the blank spaces between each group of symbols have meaning. This sentence is far more difficult to read:

Itisdifficulttoreadwithouttheproperspaces.

When you were reading the coded sentence on page 1 you may have noticed that some of the symbols were very alike (For example, the two arrows shown here: ⇨ ➪). In addition, some of the same symbols appeared more than once. (The black triangle pointing to the left appears three times.) You understand that these symbols have meaning and that small changes in their appearance and placement alters meaning. These "rules" come naturally to you, but for a young child it is necessary to become familiar with these concepts.



⇦⇨⇦◢



⇦↕◀◀↙⇨

To continue our attempts to "read" the message, have a look at the drawings to the left. Below each one is the group of symbols that represent that object. Does this help you to get more meaning from the sentence? The sentence has been repeated again here:

⇦⇨⇦◢ ◀⇨↗⇦▽ ⇨ ⇦↕◀◀↙⇨

Are you able to "break the code"? Each of the clues helps in our efforts to get meaning from the print.

The point of this exercise is to illustrate that there are many pre-reading skills that must be in place before a child is able and ready to get meaning from what s/he reads. To develop these skills children must be given many opportunities to practice. They must develop their listening skills, their visual discrimination skills, gain control of the muscles that coordinate their eye movements, be able to concentrate, etc.. We know that children learn best when they are given lots of opportunities for **hands-on exploration**. When we encourage them to enjoy picture books, read stories to them (on a daily basis), provide opportunities for them to have their own words written down, label items that are important to them, etc.. we are paving the way for later success in reading. Work sheets and rote learning have little meaning for very young children and may in fact detract from the joy and excitement of learning to read.

ECE Connection encourages teachers and caregivers to introduce children to the wonder of books. In-class book corners are an important way to promote children's interest in books. To assist you in your efforts we have available a limited selection of children's story books. Teachers willing to set-up and maintain a book corner can obtain books (free of charge). Contact your resource centre for details. (By the way, the coded message above says "Baby takes a bottle.")

Article by S. Tyrrell

References: The Nursery School & Kindergarten by Katherine Read & June Patterson, Holt Rinehart & Winston, New York,1980

Getting Involved, Workshops for parents by Ellen Frede, High/Scope Press, 1984

ECE Connection

Volume 4, Issue 8 May 1998

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GRADUATION 2
LISTENING GAME 2
CURRICULUM KITS 3
SALUTATIONS! 3

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

"A GOOD RELATIONSHIP", INSIGHTS INTO DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

AND

SPECIAL RECOGNITION IS GIVEN TO TWO TEACHERS,

DON'T MISS THIS ISSUE!

Children's Eating Habits

We want to get you thinking about the food that is eaten by the children in your classroom. To begin, respond to the following statements with true (T) or false (F).

1. *The children in my classroom usually bring in or buy food that is pre-packaged.* ( )
2. *Sweet drinks are the most common beverage consumed by the children in my class.* ( )
3. *Fresh fruits or vegetables are seldom eaten by the children in my classroom.* ( )
4. *I can't do anything about the food that is eaten by the children in my classroom.* ( )

If you answered "true" to all or most of the above statements you are among the many teachers and caregivers we are asking for help. There is growing concern over the eating habits of our Nation's children. Why? First of all, children whose diets contain mainly processed foods (also known as "fast foods" and "junk foods") are at risk for later health problems. Children's growing bodies need the proper balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals. Often important nutrients are lacking in highly processed, pre-packaged foods. Secondly, eating patterns established in early childhood usually last a lifetime. The sad fact is that many of Grenada's children regularly eat highly processed foods. These foods are usually high in sugar, fat and salt and often lack essential vitamins and minerals. It's a bit like putting poor quality gasoline in your new car. The car works but does not run as well as it should. Eventually the car's engine will require costly

Behaviour problems can be caused by poor nutrition.

Brain development can be affected by inadequate nutrition.

Continued on page 3

PS 026905

Graduation

As the end of the school year approaches many will be making plans for some sort of graduation ceremony. A great deal of time and effort goes into these events. Many parents have come to expect these productions and some teachers see it as a chance to demonstrate the benefits of their programmes. There is another side to this. Concerns have raised about the cost. For parents struggling to make ends meet the cost of a gown and cap is an added burden. There is also the question of the suitability of the event. Are the children actively involved? Does the ceremony mean anything to them or are they required to sit still for long periods of time? Often the hours of practice that are required to prepare children for their graduation performance places added stress on both the children and the teacher. ECE Connection would like to offer a list of alternative suggestions. These were posted in last year's June/July newsletter:

- Have a family picnic with games, stories and songs.
- Ask parents/guardians to contribute something to a refreshment table.
- Make up a symbolic bridge and have the teacher walk the children across it to indicate that the child has crossed over to another class or school.
- Have children help you to write a story about their year at school. Let them help to illustrate it and then read the story to their parents.
- Write a few positive words about each child and read them as each child is given a memento of graduation (a book mark, certificate, etc.)

Additional suggestions:

- Have a scavenger hunt in which teams of parents and children are given a list of simple objects to find. (Example, a smooth stone, a heart-shaped leaf, a red flower, a sweetie wrapper, a spoon.) They are given a time limit (about 30 minutes) in which to go out and find as many items as possible. Once they return the items are displayed and discussed. Refreshments are then served.
- Have parents/guardians and the children do a craft together. Provide the materials and encourage everyone to be creative... making a coconut husk boat might be fun!

Whatever you choose to do for graduation should be relatively short in length and allow your students to be actively involved.

Article written by S. Tyrrell

Listening Game

The following listening game requires no props and helps children to practice their listening skills in a "fun" way. The beauty of it is that it works well with a large group of children. We all know how difficult it is to get the time to do things in small groups!

Have the children sit around you so that each child can see and hear you clearly. Explain to the children that you are going to ask them to do something. Give your verbal instruction, for example, "Touch your toes." at the same time as you show them the action. Congratulate them on good listening. Now give a different instruction and show them the action, for example "Now touch your chin." Repeat this process a few times so they become familiar with the game. Now tell them that you are going to play a trick and that you will TELL them what to do with words but that your body will be doing a different action. Tell them "Your job is to LISTEN to my WORDS and do as my words tell you." (An example of this would be to tell them, "Touch your nose." while you are touching your hair.) Make light of the fact that some children followed your actions instead of your words. Repeat the activity with different instructions and actions. Encourage children's efforts. The object is to let children practice their listening skills while having fun.

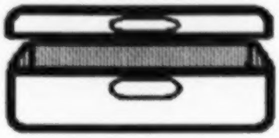
Children's Eating Habits continued

repairs. Teachers and caregivers are in a position to help children and their parents understand the importance of proper nutrition.

What can teachers and caregivers do to promote healthy eating? First of all, we can model good eating habits. What we bring to work for our snacks and lunch says far more than giving children a lecture about the foods they should eat. Encourage parents to send in nutritious foods. (Some schools insist that the food provided be healthy and nutritious. Others require that vendors selling to the children on school property provide nutritious foods.) Provide parents with a list of affordable suggestions. This could include: sandwiches, whole wheat Crix and cheese, hard boiled eggs, dried or fresh fruits, nuts (unsalted are best). Bring in examples of healthy foods, talk about them and let the children help to prepare and taste them.

ECE Connection has two kits that offer suggestions and props for promoting healthy eating. The kits are titled "Dinner's Ready!" (suitable for toddlers) and "The Foods We Eat" (suitable for preschool and school age children). For more information on the things you can do to promote healthy eating contact Mrs. Betty Findlay (Grenada Food & Nutrition Council) at 440-2126.

Curriculum Kits



Designed for children's use!

On March 11th Pre-Primary teachers attending a Ministry of Education workshop in Grenville were able to view and borrow a selection of curriculum kits. The kits on display were some of those slated for the St. Andrew's resource centre. There is some good news for teachers in the St. Andrew's area. It appears that a site for your resource library has been found. Details will be provided in next month's newsletter.

We are encouraged to see that more and more teachers are borrowing kits. For your information a list of kits available at all resource centres is posted:

The Alphabet
Numbers
Colours & Shapes
My Body... All About Me
The Food We Eat
Travel Plants & Trees
Dinosaurs
Shapes & Colours (toddler)
Dinner's Ready! (toddler)
Magnificent Me (toddler)
Things That Go (toddler)
Fine Motor
More Fine Motor
Farm Animals
Train Set
Board Books (toddler)
Board Books Two (toddler)
Mega Blox
Aquaplay
Toddler Activity Table
Ten Trolls
Fisher Price Play House or
Fisher Price Farm Set

We encourage teachers and caregivers to let children actively explore these items. Just because a kit doesn't fit with your Ministry theme does not mean that you can't borrow the kit and place the items in one of your learning corners. The kits are designed to promote learning through active involvement. Please contact ECE Connection at 444-0528 if you need an ID card or have any questions about the kits.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Norma Noel** of **Gouyave Kindergarten, St John's RC School.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of May 1998.) Should we hear from you by this date a selection of goodies will be forwarded to your school.

Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected at random from a computer generated list. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible each month. Check next month's newsletter to see if your name appears.

ECE Connection

Volume 4, Issue 9 *June/July 1998*

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUGGESTIONS & UPDATES ON MATERIAL AVAILABLE THROUGH YOUR RESOURCE CENTRE.

A GOOD RELATIONSHIP

DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

As teachers and caregivers we develop a relationship with each child in our classroom or centre. These relationships form as we get to know the children in our care. Each is different; some are "easy", the child behaves in a way that we understand and we feel comfortable as the child's teacher. Others are quite "difficult". We may have regular clashes with the child. At times the relationship we have with a child may be so challenging that we do not feel capable of properly meeting that child's needs. It is best to to seek assistance when things get to be too much. Speak with the parent or guardian to get a better understanding of their child. Talk to a fellow teacher/caregiver (in confidence). Ask your Ministry Supervisor for advice.

Seeking help for problems is a sign of strength rather than weakness. It is also useful for all of us who work with children to remind ourselves that we are the means by which children learn about themselves. What we say and do has a lasting effect on the children in our care.

As adults in a position of responsibility and trust it is our duty to make the effort to learn about each child. Every child needs to feel accepted and valued. We do this by showing respect. How do we show respect? It is more than good manners. Respect is shown in the way we speak to children. "Jemma you sound very upset, can I help you?" instead of, "You are crying like a big baby." Respect is shown when we display a genuine interest in each child as an individual.

Continued on page 2

PS 026905

Continued from page 1

"Arnold, I notice that you spent a long time colouring that picture." instead of, "Good work." Respect is shown when we listen to children and let them know that we are listening. "You sound excited. Tell me about the big truck that you saw." instead of a distracted, "That's nice."

Sadly for some children, the caring and concern shown by teachers and caregivers may be the only positive attention they get. For children whose experiences have led them to lack trust and who find little joy in their world we can make a difference. Knowing something of the child's background may help us to pinpoint the causes and offer help. For children we suspect are being abused or neglected it is our duty as adults to assist. The following is a list of present procedures for dealing with suspected abuse:

1. *Speak with the child first.*
2. *Speak with the parent(s)/guardian.*
3. *If a teacher in a school with a principal, speak to the principal.*
4. *Call Ministry of Social Services at* ***440-7994*** *or* ***440-7952*** *and report your suspicions, or go in to the Ministry of Social Services on the Carenage, St. George's and report your concerns. A Social Welfare Officer will follow up on your report.*

In addition, ECE Connection has a copy of a handbook that may assist teachers/caregivers in understanding and dealing with child abuse. Ask for *Child Abuse: A Handbook for Early Childhood Educators.*

> ***"The child who we want to touch least needs it the most."***
>
> **The Touch Film**

It is not possible to be everything for every child but we have the potential to make a difference. We can show caring in the way we speak and the way we touch children. We can help each child to feel worth our effort. Several years ago, while viewing a film about the importance of physical touch (The Touch Film), I came across a phrase that has stayed with me: *"The child who we want to touch least needs it the most."* *S. Tyrrell*

Child Protection Act

The *Coalition on the Rights of the Child* is pleased to report that the new *Child Protection Act* has been passed. More information on this important piece of legislation will be provided as it becomes available.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

It is encouraging to find that growing numbers of teachers are making use of ECE Connection's resources. Upon special request from a member of Min. of Ed. staff, ECE Connection wishes to recognise the following teachers for their efforts to obtain and utilise curriculum kits and teacher resource material:

Mrs. Augustina. Steele of Tivoli R.C. Pre-Primary, St. Andrew's. Mrs. Steele was among the first group of teachers to obtain an ECEC ID card and regularly borrows material, despite the great distance she must travel to obtain kits, etc. Mrs. Steele also writes to us regularly with suggestions and words of encouragement. She is an inspiration!

Ms. Wendyla Mitchell of River View Pre-Primary, St. George's. Ms. Mitchell is also an early ID card holder. To date she has borrowed the greatest number of kits and is always quick to respond to our requests for feedback. We are delighted!

In acknowledgement of their efforts ECE Connection will be forwarding each teacher a certificate of recognition and a copy of the book *60 Super Simple Crafts (Herbert, 1996)* containing craft activities for children.

Resource Centre Update

Thanks to funds provided by the German Embassy, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago and donations from Mrs. Bernice Grant and Ms. Madeline Grant, ECE Connection has purchased a die cutting machine. This tool will enable teachers/caregivers to simply cut-out quantities of 4 inch paper or bristol board letters and numerals. These can be used in classrooms and centres for decoration or for the creation of educational material and activities. More information about this tool will be provided in your next newsletter.

Salutations!

Greetings to **Cecelia Ann John of NCH Action for Children, St. George's.** ECE Connection is waiting to hear from you. Please write to us to confirm receipt of this newsletter. (Your letter must be postmarked before the end of July 1998.) Should we hear from you by this date, a selection of goodies will be forwarded to your place of work.

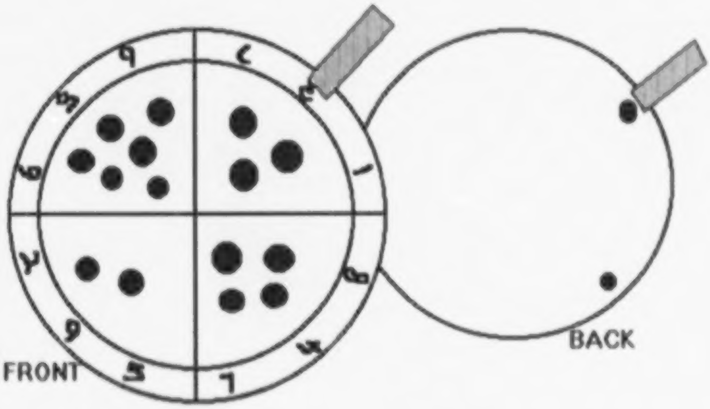
Salutations! is a regular feature of this newsletter. Names are selected at random from a computer generated list. If you are on our current mailing list your name is eligible each month. Check our next issue to see if your name appears.

Classroom Resources

Create educational activities from basic supplies.

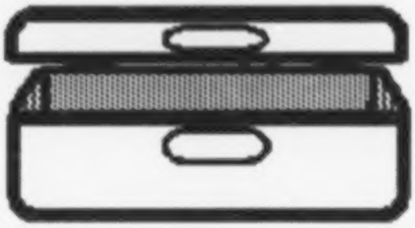
As requested, more Popsicle sticks have been provided for the creation of educational games, activities, crafts, etc.. Plain wooden sticks and a smaller number of dyed sticks have been provided. In addition, a variety of colours of felt (fabric) is available. Felt can be used for the creation of durable teaching props. The drawing outlines, found in the book *Felt Board Fun For Everyday & Holidays* written by Liz and Dick Wilmes, can assist you in creating simple felt pieces. Contact your resource centre for these items.

The following is a simple activity that you can create to help reinforce a variety of academic concepts. The example below reinforces number/numeral recognition.



You will need a piece of **cardboard** cut into a circle (approximately 8 inches in diameter) or a sturdy paper plate, **felt tipped markers**, and four **clothes pegs**. Draw an '+' dividing the plate or cardboard circle into quarters, as shown above. Draw a smaller circle inside the larger one, as shown. Draw a different quantity of items (black dots drawn above) in each of the quarters and write three or four numerals (one being the numeral that correctly describes the number of items shown) in the border formed by the smaller circle. On the back of the plate, place a mark that would be covered by the peg in the space that correctly identifies the numeral, as shown above right. A child plays the game by placing a peg over the numeral that s/he feels matches the number of objects in each quarter.

Make Your Own Kit



Containers of reusable teaching props, known as curriculum kits, are available on loan through your resource centre. The items in the kits are selected according to a theme or subject and are designed to offer children the opportunity for hands-on learning. Kits provide different ways for children to learn by doing. The material in the kits encourages them to see, hear, touch (and where appropriate taste and smell). This makes their learning more meaningful and is more easily remembered and understood. It is more enjoyable too! You can create kits of your own. Here's how:

First, decide upon the **theme or subject** of your kit. For example, "Safety"

Second, gather information about the topic and jot down the **important points** that you would like children to learn. For example, 'crossing the street safely', 'how to use the phone in an emergency', 'what to do in case of fire'...

Third, think of as many ways as possible to provide children with the opportunity to explore the important points you chose. Think of how you could include things about safety in the different learning corners in your room. For example, blocks - add some toy cars and homemade traffic signs so children will think about road safety, books - make-up a book with pictures and words about safety, dramatic play - add an old phone and tape to it the emergency number 911.

Always be on the **lookout for items for your kit**, books, puzzles, pictures, toys... Tell people that you are collecting items for a special kit and ask them to help you. Write to relatives and friends overseas and ask for their help. You will need a container suitable for holding the material you find.

Your kit is always a "work in progress", you may remove and/or add to it as you learn what works and what doesn't.

ECE Connection would like to hear about the kits you create. Write to us to share your ideas. By the way, we are in the process of creating a Safety Kit!

Editor's Note

I begin with an apology to readers for the absence of a June edition of ECE Connection's newsletter. A number of computer problems and poor scheduling on my part are the reason for the delay.

The combined June/July newsletter marks the end of ECE Connection's fourth season. (Yes, our first newsletter was published in 1994!) Your September newsletter will be mailed in the final weeks of August and will contain updates of resources that teachers may wish to gather in time for "back to school". Be sure to look out for your copy.

We have experienced difficulty locating a suitable site for a Northern Grenada resource centre. The good news is that we have a possible site and hope to be able to announce the opening of our newest resource centre in time for back-to-school.

We thank those who take the time to call or write us with encouragement and suggestions. You make our day!

From the small but active team of volunteers who make all of this possible, have a safe and relaxing holiday!